

THE VETERAN;

OR,

A MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES:

VOL. II.

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THE VETERAN;

OR,

MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES.

A married life, to speak the best,
Is all a lottery contest ; • •
Man's an odd compound, after all
And ever has been since the Fall ;
And though a slave in love's soft school,
In wedlock claims his right to rule.

COTTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE VETERAN,

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MATRIMONIAL FELICITIES.

CHAP. I.

Our day of marriage shall be yours; one feast, one house, one mutual happiness.

Two Gent. Verona.

Sad was the hour and luckless was the day.

Collins.

Two Weddings.

THE next morning Mr. Trevillyan went to breakfast in Lincoln's-Inn anxious to learn the adventures of yesterday; he was much amused at Mrs. Langton's exit, and congratulated his friend that her sister had spared him that part of his difficulties. They then went to more pleasing topics.—Mr. Fanshaw expressed a wish that the same day should

be fraught with the happiness of both, and that they, together with Mrs. Mordant and her son, and Mrs. Delaval, should pass the honeymoon at Darlington ; — and having settled all these things to their own satisfaction, they went to submit them to their ladies. Miss Mordant was passive — Miss Delaval acquiescent — Mrs. Delaval however excused herself — her spirits wanted the elasticity of youth to get the better of the distress she had suffered, and she could not be persuaded to take her “ sorrowing heart to the bridal feast ; ” — yet she told Mrs. Fanshaw that the marriage was the happiest event that she now could know.

They were now seldom apart. Miss Delaval seemed happiness personified; virtuous pleasure danced in her eye, confident affection reigned in her heart.

Miss Mordant was contented ; she was fulfilling the only wish her mother had ever strongly urged ; and though, had she consulted only her own feelings, she

would gladly have remained single, yet all her friends had been so anxious about it, that she yielded. She had however been less lively in conversation, — less playful ever since the picture scene. She had watched Mr. Trevillyan, too, with suspicion: he seemed aware of it, and carefully abstained from giving her offence.

As the day approached, she passed much of her time in her own chamber, and she every day lost something of her vivacity.

The eventful morning at length arrived. — Miss Delaval rose with the lark, and was as joyous too. — Miss Mordant remained in her dressing-room as long as she could; and when she did appear resignation, not happiness, sat on her features. Beautiful she was at all times; and perhaps more touchingly so in her plaintive moods; but her mother felt reluctant and almost repentant when she remarked her heavy eye, and blanched

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cheek. She kissed her and offered her some refreshments, which she took cheerfully, and joined in the conversation.

The carriages were at the door, and the two brides went in Mr. Fortescue's.—The gentlemen were at the church to receive them ; and there,

“ A contract of eternal bond of love,
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of their hands
Attested by the interchange of rings,”

took place.

Mr. Fortescue gave Clara Mordant away ; and when the service was passed, and he bestowed his blessing upon her with parental affection, her tears rushed with ungovernable rapidity, and she would have sunk at his feet if he had not caught her. He pressed her to his bosom as if he entered into all her feelings, while his tears coursed each other down his agitated cheek. He whispered his reliance upon her fortitude as he presented her to Mr. Trevillyan.

"Sir," said he, "I give you this day such a wife as few men possess: be it your care to deserve her, and may you be sensible of your treasure."

Clara's weakness was only momentary; she raised herself, turned to her husband, and with a smile received his salutation; and from that moment she determined to devote herself to his will, and to study his pleasure.

They did not wait to witness the second ceremony, but returned to Sloane-street to breakfast; and Mr. Fortescue taking his adopted daughter aside, presented her with a very valuable pocket-book richly lined with bank-notes of great value. Mrs. Mordant was waiting to receive them, and found relief in observing the glow which had superseded the wan tint upon her daughter's countenance, and which was really the effect of agitation.

They were soon joined by the rest of the party, and sat down to a numerously

attended and elegant breakfast. — Mr Fanshaw was gay, and in the highest spirits — the life of the whole party. He had his own thorough approbation. He had settled a handsome annuity upon Mrs. Delaval, and a much larger settlement upon his wife than she had the least idea his fortune warranted ; and when she represented this to him, he told her, that he had not laid open his affairs to her, because he wished for the gratification of being loved only for himself.

Mr. Trevillyan did not know how to be gay ; and he sometimes thought the nonsense talked by his friend, and at which every body laughed, was beneath the dignity of a sensible man ; and the philanthropy with which he lent himself to the welfare of his fellow-creatures, absolute folly. — Yet when he witnessed the results of these effects, and the satisfaction he appeared to derive from his exertions and success, in any benevolent

undertaking, he could not help feeling envious of his sensations ; but they never excited emulation in the good cause.

They set off in their respective carriages, taking easy stages, and seeing every thing worth notice on the road ; and arrived the fourth morning (for Mr. Fanshaw had determined it should be by day light) at his estate of Darlington ; and, as it was now the middle of May, and a very fine season, the country was in its highest beauty. The apple and pear trees were in full blossom, and looked absolutely like so many rich orchards of balsams, the smell too of the apple blossoms, with which the hedges were thickly ornamented, was very refreshing. They approached the mansion of Darlington through a luxuriant avenue of large oaks. The park was finely wooded, and stocked with deer, and every now and then a brake afforded a most delightful prospect of the rapid and winding Severn, backed by the

Malvern hills, which, for softness of outline, and beauty of effect, have few competitors. — Young Mordant and the Trevillyans were quite enchanted; but Mrs. Fanshaw sat speechless: yet the expression of her countenance fully demonstrated her surprise and delight. — He enjoyed, but did not interrupt her feelings. At last they became too powerful for suppression, and she burst into tears and threw herself into his arms: he pressed her affectionately to his bosom. She had time to recover herself before they alighted; and they found the house equal to the grounds.

After they had taken some refreshment, Mr. Fanshaw did the honour of showing his mansion, and his wife found that her taste, which had been drawn from her with great apparent inadvertency, had been carefully followed in the fitting it up. There was scarcely a room wherein she could not detect some instance of this delicate attention.

The party retired to dress, and the gentlemen went to look at a conservatory which had been recently built. When they returned they found only Mrs. Trevillyan in the drawing-room.

Mr. Fanshaw inquired for his wife. — Her friend said she had left her dressed, and expected her down : fearing lest she had mistaken her way, he went to seek her. — He opened her chamber door ; she was not there,—that of her dressing-room, was not quite closed : he presented himself at it, intending gaily to offer himself as lady's-maid ; — but his gaiety was turned into delight, when he observed her on her knees, too intently devout to hear his approach..

An indescribable emotion took possession of his mind as he contemplated her light easy figure in the graceful attitude of devotion ; but when, with uplifted hands and tearful eyes, he heard her fine voice raised in gratitude to Heaven, imploring blessings upon himself, and

beseeching the Almighty to make her worthy such a husband! so many comforts! his feelings nearly overcame him ; and it was with difficulty he commanded them sufficiently to prevent his throwing himself by her side and joining in her tribute of gratitude. When her affecting prayer was ended, she turned round, and her eyes met those of her husband, which were beaming upon her with admiration and affection ; and she soon found herself pressed to his bosom, — and here passed many “vows of faith, and ne’er a false one.”

Their lives, as we shall see, were one constant scene of affection to each other, and of benevolence to those around them.

When they returned to their friends, dinner was announced ; and in the evening Mr. Fanshaw amused them with showing them a beautiful and favourite apartment, which he had fitted up with much cost, with chymical apparatus.

They were much pleased with some experiments he made them, for this was his hobby, and he had spared no expense to gratify it. They had many fine parts of the country to see, and were much pleased with Croome, the Earl of Coventry's, and many other seats in the neighbourhood. — They presented themselves at church; and after that day they were visited by every acquaintance of Mr. Fanshaw's, till at last they began to wish the ceremony ended.

Mr. and Mrs. Trevillyan passed five weeks here, but Mr. Mordant had left them at the end of the second. The Fanshaws accompanied their friends the first step of their journey towards Bath; and they parted with great apparent regret, and promised to pass some part of each year together.

Mrs. Mordant had declined the invitation to Darlington, but promised to meet her daughter at Bath, and go to Eldrington with her, for some months.

They found her punctual to her appointment, attended by Felix; and fortunately for himself and some others, the little creature first recognised Mr. Trevillyan, and played a thousand antics round him, before he saw his mistress: possibly she kept purposely behind. It really appeared as if he had been taking lessons of policy, or had instinct enough to find out to whom he should pay court.

The artifice, if it was one, succeeded. Mr. Trevillyan caressed him, and for a long while made him his pet.—They soon found out Colonel Desburgh, and they were mutually pleased at the meeting. Mrs. Desburgh appeared now near her confinement, and the old gentleman in the highest glee; but it was not expected that the heir was to make his appearance till August, when Miss Eliza Dennison was to be with her; and the Colonel made Mr. Trevillyan promise that he would not only attend the christening, but also stand sponsor.

Mr. Trevillyan then made enquiries after Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, and was pleased to hear how well they were settled.

Our party invited the Desburghs to dine with them, and the next day they reached Eldrington Hall; but it was too late at night to see any of the beauties which surrounded it, and which were of a totally opposite cast to those of Darlington.

Here the sea formed a beautiful feature; and the shipping from all nations which was constantly passing, took away, even in winter, the dreariness which it otherwise presents to a prospect.

The distant view of the fertile Isle of Wight, — Ryde, and the busy scene off Portsmouth — together with a home prospect rich in wood and pasture, formed the chief beauties of this sweet place; but, compared to Darlington, it was a mere toy; yet it was difficult to decide which was the most beautiful in point of prospect.

Mr. Trevillyan appeared to have no wish of following the example of his friend in showing the house : possibly aware that his great deficiency of attention would be doubly felt on the comparison ; but indeed it was obvious enough without the contrast.—The only apartment which had had any new furniture for the last thirty years was his own dressing-room which he had fitted up immediately upon his father's death. It happened that this was the pleasantest room in the whole house, and the only one which communicated with their bedroom. It had a handsome wardrobe, hanging presses, a sofa, and two lounging chairs, and showed that he well understood what comfort was ; but for his wife there was a small chest of drawers, large enough to hold about a tenth of a modern wardrobe,—no cheval glasses,—no luxuries of any kind.—Again, her beautiful piano-forte the last present of Henry Fortescue's, was crammed into a

cold if not a damp parlour, because it would spoil the appearance of the saloon.

• Oh ! how unlike was all this to Darlington, or even to the far less costly arrangement of the house Henry Fortescue had furnished for her. — Then her wish was his law : — she had been consulted upon every occasion, and nothing was good enough for her. — She blushed as she felt the comparison, and determined to indulge it no farther. Mrs. Mordant was struck with his absolute neglect of her comforts, and mentioned many things which she conceived necessary, to Mr. Trevillyan, who apologised with some consciousness for it, by saying that he had left those things for her to do to her own taste. — Upon this hint the mother determined to send them what was proper, without consulting him further.

CHAP. II.

For life, I prize it as I weigh grief,
Which I well could spare.

Winter's Tale.

Felix lost. — A surprise.

AFTER showing his wife to the neighbourhood and receiving and paying visits. Mr. Trevillyan received a letter from the Colonel to the following effect:—

DEAR SIR,

It has pleased God to make me a father in my old age.—Sophy was confined this morning, some weeks earlier than she expected. She and my fine boy are likely to thrive. Remember the christening; and remember, too, that when I ask you to stand sponsor to my child, I look to you to be a father to him, in case it should not be the pleasure of the

Almighty to spare his own,—I am not used to enlist recruits, without expecting they should serve. Best regards to your wife. Your faithful friend,

C. DESBURGH.

“Pray send word of this to your friend Fanshaw, and tell him I shall call upon him to stand to my girl next year. I prefer young men for this office, because there is a chance of their being called to fulfil the duties of it.”

About a fortnight after this, another letter arrived, saying Mrs. Desburgh was so well, that at the end of five weeks from her confinement, they would be ready to receive them. Mrs. Trevillyan did not find herself particularised in the invitation; and as she was by no means anxious to be upon familiar terms with the lady, whose character she never admired, she proposed staying at home with her mother; and her husband, knowing that her dislike had rather more justice

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in it than even she was aware of, succeeded. He went ; and we grieve to say she did not regret this their first separation ;— indeed it was of her own seeking. Yet no one could say she was unhappy ; her husband was as attentive to her as *he* could be to any one :— but in all his actions,—almost indeed in his very words, one might read “ I am the master here ;” and every body about him appeared to acknowledge it. Insensibly his wife adopted the same manner, and there was throughout much more of duty than of affection in the deference shown him.— Mrs. Mordant remarked with concern the increased gravity of her daughter ; but Clara had, by severe discipline over her thoughts, carefully avoided the slightest expression of dissatisfaction. She had determined to perform the duties of a good wife ; and she did so, without repining : but hitherto she had had no great trials.

Two days after Mr. Trevillyan’s de-

parture, Felix, who never by any chance left his mistress for an hour during the day, was missing. Mrs. Mordant and her daughter had taken a walk in the pleasure-grounds ; the dog was with them, and both ladies had observed him barking and capering at a shrub : they supposed it was at a bird, and were too intently engaged in conversation to suffer such a trifle to interrupt it. They wandered far, and did not think of returning, until the bright moon reminded them of the hour. When they reached the house, supper (a ceremony always observed at the Hall) was waiting them. The noble Felix had always honoured *this*, and every other meal, with his punctual attendance ; and was never the least interesting guest at the table. Now, however, he was absent, and no where to be found. Servants were dispatched in all directions : they went to the spot the ladies described, — whistled, called,

enquired, all in vain — poor Felix was far out of hearing.

Mrs. Trevillyan became exceedingly anxious and agitated. " Henry Fortescue's last present had deserted her at the moment when she had been faithless to the memory of his master. There existed no present necessity of disguising her feelings, when she offended no one by their indulgence; and while she thought she was weeping for Felix, perhaps an association of ideas presented another object. Twelve o'clock came, and the family retired to rest, fully determined to search the neighbourhood the next morning for the fugitive.

Mrs. Trevillyan, however, could not be easy. She dismissed her attendant, and walked about her room for some time. She then went into the dressing-room, and finding it a beautiful light night — Reader, we were contemplating a very sublime description of moonlight scenery,

when “the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees, and they did make no noise,” — the sea — the ships — the nightingale — a distant cascade — the sweet murmur of which — and a thousand other auxiliaries — But we are very plain matter-of-fact people ; so, having given you ample materials, we beg you to put them into the most bewitching shape your imagination can paint, and return with me to the dressing-room, where Clara had opened the window, and stood pensively gazing on the placid scene around her. After indulging herself for half an hour here, inclination, which always grows with indulgence, prompted her to go out and search herself for the dog.

John Harding had been left at home by his master. He was now no longer valet, but had been installed to the high office of butler ; and etiquette did not allow of his leaving home except in the suite of his mistress. John respected his master very much ; he thought him as

he had known all others think him, a miracle of genius and erudition ; but there was something so sweet, so gentle in the manners of his mistress, that he ~~devoted~~ himself to her with the most respectful affection.

He was surprised to hear her voice calling him, when he supposed all the household were in bed. He rose instantly, and learning her inclination, cheerfully prepared to follow her through the grounds ; but so careful was he of her, that he would not allow her to proceed far until he had returned for her clogs.— They then went to the shrub where she well remembered poor Felix stopped. She called upon him loudly ; — hope seemed to lend energy and strength to her voice. Finding this ineffectual, and John's more powerful whistle vain, she began to fear some animal must have killed him. She desired John to look a little way farther on : she herself examined all the places near her, and then

went to the clump of trees which were close to the spot — but he was not there. Her spirits sunk, as she sorrowfully exclaimed, “ My poor Felix, thou hast deserted me, when most I needed thy comfort; and there is a reproach implied by thy desertion, which none but myself can feel.”

Just at this moment, she saw, or she fancied she saw, something move not far from her. She started! — but the dark shadows of a bright moon-light nearly obscured the objects beneath the thick foliage of the trees. She stood motionless, fixing her eyes with painful suspense on the spot. — Something did move, she could not discover what. — She scarcely breathed. The object approached, and every nerve was strained to discover what it could be. She neither wanted courage nor fortitude; but when she heard a long drawn sigh close to her, she called aloud to John, and then said with

great agitation, “ In the name of Heaven, what are you?”

“ A deserted wretch,” answered a deep voice ; “ deserted by her for whom I braved every danger, and have been exposed to miseries which would have killed many a stouter man.”

It was impossible to mistake that voice, although it assumed a tone of reproach very different from what she had been used to. — It was that of Henry Forescue.

She heard no more. John hastened to the spot, and found his mistress leaning against a tree, apparently lifeless. He himself was not in much better case ; for just before he entered the inclosure, a light figure passed him, and darted, with the fleetness of an arrow from a bow, across his path, and was out of sight in an instant. All this passed in the course of two minutes ; — but it made a lasting impression upon more memories than his. John, with all his good sense, was

very superstitious. That this was a ghost immediately occurred to him, and we are not sure if he did not ask himself if a ghost could fly away with his mistress. Which way he solved this knotty point we have not heard; but as he certainly did advance, although with much fear and trembling, to the spot where he saw his mistress, as before said, we presume it was in the negative.

She was just recovering her recollection - he spoke to her, and this roused her, — and he was delighted to hear the sound of a human voice. She asked him if he had seen any body?

"No, madam," said he, "I believe they have no bodies, — they say they have only spirits but why any spirit should come from the other world to fright you or me, madam, I'm sure I can't think. It is the first I ever saw, — and I don't know any thing I have done to make them take so much trouble

about me ; and doubtless you, my lady, are still more innocent than me."

There was something of conscious rectitude, as well as simplicity, in his reply, that under other circumstances might have amused her. "At present her agitation was extreme ; and she was not sorry that John had himself pointed out an excuse for it, which would never have entered her imagination. She was scarcely able to walk to the house, and had no inclination to speak ; but John, for the first time, appeared to forget the distance between them, and he indulged himself aloud with his own conjectures ;—thinking, perhaps, that the sound of his voice would secure them from a second visit of the ghost ; and he judged right—they reached home in safety.

Mrs. Trevillyan retired to her room, though John would fain have had her take some refreshment. Her first impulse was to throw herself on the bed, and give free vent to her anguish ; and

we fear we must acknowledge that she yielded to it. The next, however, was far better, and we hope will obtain her forgiveness in the eyes of our most virtuous readers. She called herself to a severe account for her conduct, recollected that fortitude and resolution were now more necessary than before; and the strength of mind which we have seen her exert for the consolation of Mr. Fortescue, again came to her aid. Nor this alone. Ashamed even to herself of betraying so much weakness, she sank upon her knees, and in the ardour of true devotion, found relief to her agitation. She earnestly prayed for assistance and support against her own weakness—for of that she had much reason to fear. Her prayer was heard. She retired to rest, and slept an hour.

At breakfast, her mother remarked the alteration of her looks; and Clara gained resolution enough to inform her, with tolerable calmness, of the adventure of

the night. Mrs. Mordant could hardly believe that what she heard was not the account of a feverish dream of her daughter's, and it was long ere she could give credit to the assertion ; and at last, when she found it was an absolute fact, it was impossible to rejoice at it. Bitterly did she accuse herself of the urgency of the advice she had given : indeed it could hardly be called *advice*. She determined to write immediately to Mr. Fortescue.

CHAP. III.

As I am now unhappy ; which is more than
History can pattern, though devis'd and play'd
To take spectators.

Winter's Tale.

An Explanation.

WHILE Mrs. Mordant was busy with her letter of enquiry to Mr. Fortescue, a countryman brought back Felix, and desired to see Mrs. Trevillyan herself. John Harding thought the news too good to need ceremony ; nor did Felix wait the formality of an introduction,—for while the man was speaking to him, the dog flew to the well-known door, where the ladies usually sat, gave a scratch at it, and finding it give way, sprung into the room, and made so much noise with his greeting, that John waited

some moments at the door ere he could be heard, and the countryman was at his heels.

When he had told his mistress who the man was, he retired ; and when the door was shut after him, the countryman advanced to the ladies, and put a letter upon the table, at an equal distance between them. It was addressed to Mrs. Mordant : she opened it : there was an inclosure to Mrs. Trevillyan, though only addressed to *Clara*. Her mother hesitated to give it her.

The man, thinking the ladies too busy to mind him, was making his retreat ; but curiosity, or some other feeling, was too strong to be repelled. Mrs. Trevillyan put down the unopened letter, and both the ladies began questioning him. The fellow, at first pleaded ignorance, and knew nothing ; as soon, however, as the touch of five shillings met his fingers, his recollection returned, and he said, a sailor had done to their cottage in a

terrible, weak state, and had asked for lodgings, about a week since; that "I and woife thought sure he wur mad, for he sat gloomy loike, and never axed for nothing to eat. • At first she wur feared to stay with him whilst I wur away; but she soon got over that. But sure," said he, gaining confidence as he proceeded, " what a froight he did give us! In the middle of the night, when he wur got much better, our Bet she wakes me, and tells me, sure as death lodger wur gone out, and run away with all we got. So up I gets, and goes down and looks about me: the first thing I sees was a fine watch, and sales; I puts it to my ear, but it did not go; — but I says to myself, ' It's no robber as would leave such a fine watch behoind him.' So I left the door as I found it: but thinks I, I'll watch. But sure enough, my lady, I didn't watch long, for I fell asleep; and next morning there he wur as if nothing had happened. I suppose

he does the same every night; for when I saw him this morning, that dog was with him. I don't know what to make of him — not I. Woife she says he's a spoy : but I says he's a gentleman as wants to keep out of the way, for some reason as don't concern us. He wrote a letter t'other day, and I see a bit of the writing, and it wur all a fine text hand, like, that, my lady, — so he can't be a sailor. So indeed, my lady, this is all I know."

Mrs. Trevillyan would have been glad had he gone on for an hour. She increased her donation, and the man retired, very thankful for 'ner bounty.

The ladies were now left alone with their letters. Mrs. Mordant's only contained a request to deliver the other to her daughter; and its contents were these:

" Madam,

" Could I have supposed that Felix was an object of such solicitude to you, I certainly should not have taken him;

but the little creature seemed to be endowed with that faithfulness which, alas ! has been so much wanting elsewhere. But I will not reproach you. I shall ever earnestly pray for your happiness, though you have destroyed mine for ever. Yet, Clara, did you know my dangers, my sufferings — all encountered by my rashness in wishing to be with you a fortnight earlier than you expected me ; — did you know that the worst of these, indeed all put together, was trifling, when compared with my recent, my cruel disappointment ; — I think your conscience must upbraid you for not waiting a little, a very little longer. But why should I regret affections which have proved so transient ! — I dare not think — my brain — But adieu !

" H. F."

Mrs. Mordant immediately rang the bell, and learning which way the man went, hastened after him ; she soon saw

him, and kept him in view as she walked. They were not far out of sight of the house, ere he was joined by a man in a sailor's dress ; but she could not believe this could be Henry Fortescue. He was so thin, no one could wonder at his being taken for a ghost : — he turned, — and she perceived it was indeed the shadow of himself : — his sallow cheek and hollow eye showed present suffering, and recent ill-disposition.

She approached, and held out her hand to him ; — he hesitated, and at last turned away.

“ Henry,” said she, “ my dear Henry, surely you will speak to me.” The countryman stared, and then, warned by a motion of her hand, went away.

Henry had gone a few paces slowly forward ; but hearing that well-known voice of affection, he returned, and, with great emotion, accepted the offered hand.

“ My deaf child,” said she again,

" where have you been, and what has become of you during this dreadful absence? — you appear as one risen from the tomb."

" W^would to Heaven I had gone there," returned Henry : " it was only the thought of Clara that kept me from it, — only the recollection of the happiness that awaited me here, that lent me energy to overcome difficulties, and escape dangers, And when I landed eighteen days ago, I would not have changed situations with any being on the face of the earth. Our ship was wrecked coming home, and every soul on board, except myself, my servant, and a female whom I saved, perished: and I fear, such are her misfortunes, that she will never recover them. We were rescued, however, by an outward-bound vessel. There were only two chances of your hearing of my escape, and I learnt that both the ships we spoke with were taken by the French, so that you could not have known it. I heard

this the other day upon my landing. I ordered a post-chaise and four, to take myself and a gentleman instantly to town. While this was preparing, I was looking over some newspapers; I had gone through several, and was all impatience for the vehicle, when my eyes were attracted to the name of Mordant,— and I read her marriage,— my own affianced Clara! Judge what were my feelings,— but, indeed, you cannot judge,— nobody can. I had suffered want of food,— lost my reason; — but nothing, no anguish, I ever felt, could equal that of that hour; — my brain was on fire,— and if I had had a pistol at that moment, I have little doubt of the use I should have made of it.

“ They came to tell me the chaise was ready: — I went down with phrenzied expedition: — my friend observed my altered appearance, took me into a room, and felt my pulse, — and I know nothing

more that passed for a week, when my recollection returned.

“ My friend had watched over me as long as he could possibly spare time, and then left every order for my accommodation: he generously paid my expenses, and left money for me, although he knew nothing of my friends, or how he was to be remunerated,

“ I had recovered slowly, and had begun a letter to my father; but dreading the effect the sudden surprise might have upon him, I wrote to Charles Mordant; but my letter was hardly sane,—so I did not send it.

“ However, I have learnt that my father is well, and I do not wish him to know of my arrival until I can have it gradually broken to him. My poor father, how he will feel for me! .

“ I read in the newspaper that Mr. Trevillyan lived at Eldrington, and I was told that he was absent: — I resolved, once more, to see Clara.

“ Many a time have I seated myself in the grounds when I was able to go so far, and frequently saw her, and always attended by Felix.

“ At one time I contemplated surprising her ; but although it was evident she had ceased to regard me, I thought it cruel to remind her of what *had* been. I could not help fancying, too, that she looked less lively, and that her step had lost much of its elasticity :—in short, that she did not appear happy.

“ I enquired into the character of Mr. Trevillyan, — every one spoke of him with respect, — few with gratitude, — and none with affection ; and I had the vanity of thinking, that had the property devolved to me, I should not have been contented with such negative praise.

“ As the cottagers go to bed with the sun, I generally stroll over the grounds for hours. Last night I saw you and your daughter earnest in conversation : — the dog stayed in playfulness behind : — I

took an opportunity of calling him ; — the little creature listened a moment, and then darted to the shrub behind which I stood. I took no notice of his barking or capering until you were fairly out of hearing, and then indulged in caressing him, as the only being who had yet welcomed me to my native land. — He certainly knew me, and I determined to carry him off. At first, he was so taken up in licking my hands, and showing his affection, that he did not miss his mistress ; but when he had tired himself with this, he whined most piteously. I quieted him as well as I could ; and shut him up in my room, while I went for my nocturnal ramble.

“ I distinctly saw Clara pacing her room, and open the window. I watched the light disappear, and soon afterwards she came out, attended by a servant. — She walked fast, and I retreated to the shrub ; but thinking that would be the place she would search, I hid myself in

the plantation. She came there,—almost touched me :—I heard her breathe, — I fancied I felt it too :—she had called loudly for Felix. But now, as if despairing, her sweet voice sunk into a mournful plaintiveness, as she reproached *him* for deserting her when she most needed comfort, and then herself for being still less faithful than the dog.

“ I was almost distracted. I could have proposed carrying her away to a distant country, where we might live unknown, — but my better judgment soon came to my aid :— I spoke a few incoherent words, and hastened away.

“ I passed near to the servant, who, far from impeding my course, started as if he had seen an apparition. I sent back the dog this morning. I pray Heaven it may be a source of comfort to poor Clara. O, Mrs. Mordant ! if importuned to marry, — if it was not a voluntary act, — much have these to answer for who advised it. I cannot even now believe

that she w^bould willingly forfeit her engagement to me :—her happiness, as well as mine, is destroyed by it."

Mrs. Mordant burst into tears, and told him without reserve every occurrence ; nor did she hide Clara's reluctance, or the persuasions used by herself, Mr. Fortescue, and all her friends, to promote the match.

This greatly soothed him ; and he promised carefully to avoid all communication with her, and to leave the place the next day.

She then returned to the hall, and found her daughter busily engaged in cutting out coarse baby-linen for poor people ; and she was surprised to see how much she had done. The truth is, upon the departure of her mother she found herself in great danger of relapsing into dejection ; she therefore wisely employed herself ; and the benevolence of the occupation, and the industry with which she pursued it, soothed her mind to tolerable calmness.

CHAP. IV.

I should be sick, but that my resolution helps me.

Cymbeline.

Suffering.—A Christening.

MRS. TREVILLYAN did not immediately allow herself to ask any questions — perhaps thinking her mother would speak of her own accord ; but this not being the case, she could not resist examining her countenance. Vainly had Mrs. Mordant attempted to cheer it : tears every now and then started to her eyes, as she sat with her face towards the fire, as much out of sight of her daughter as possible.

At last, " My dear mother," said Clara, " you may tell me all, — I can — I will bear it : — but if you leave me in

ignorance, my imagination, never very tame, will picture to itself horrors which may not exist in reality."

" My dear child ! my amiable Clara !" exclaimed Mrs. Mordant, in great agitation, while she folded her to her bosom, " I can never forgive myself for promoting this marriage : — you are unhappy, Clara, by my influence, when Providence had every blessing in store for you."

" Oh, hush, my mother ; these are useless reproaches : — you may as well arraign Providence for the storm which caused that dreadful shipwreck. Of what, too, have I to complain ? Mr. Trevillyan does not understand those delicate attentions which some men excel in : you must take the temper, and disposition into consideration before you judge harshly. He has been used, from infancy, to be considered the first person, — the principal, if not the only object of devotion : and really, when you think of the indulgence he was brought up in,

you must allow he is not unamiable. *I* never looked for perfection but in one dear object:—he is for ever separated from me; and I am resolved, my dearest mother, that you shall see me reasonably happy, by devoting myself to those duties my situation calls for: nor do I yet despair of making you satisfied with your son-in-law. At any rate, I beg you never again to mention a subject of conversation quite improper for my participation."

Mrs. Mordant looked with fond admiration at her lovely daughter, whom she considered, a martyr to her obedience; and she saw that, though she spoke firmly, her countenance evinced her disorder:—a parched lip, flushed cheek, and sunken eye, were not in unison with the calmness of her expressions. Clara acknowledged that she had taken cold by the dew of the night, and her afflicted parent hurried her to bed, and sent for medical advice. The fever ran high, and the ill-

ness proved of more unpleasant consequence than was at first apprehended.

At this juncture Mr. Trevillyan returned home, and found all the house in confusion and dismay; and when he learnt the cause, it is difficult to say, whether the affection for his wife, or the disappointment to his wishes, had most weight upon his feelings. He looked forward to the birth of an heir, as the *sine qua non* of his happiness. The idea of his property going to the Fortescues was a continual thorn in his side; and he seemed as if he took a pleasure, by constant irritation, to deepen the wound it made.

Thus is happiness much more equally divided between us than we are willing to believe: those who appear to us possessed of every thing this world can give them, are no nearer to it than ourselves: — youth, health, wealth, rank, abilities, are not sufficient to secure happiness, — that belongs to the mind.

Mr. Trevillyan's mind did not possess this gem ; on the contrary, he was sorely alive to the most trifling incident which militated against the least of his comforts. He was not allowed to visit the sick chamber for some days ; and when he did, he could not help dwelling upon his own disappointment even more than upon her sufferings. She exerted herself to reconcile him to it, and in order to divert his thoughts, begged him to give the history of the christening : and after some further lamentations he began :—

" Upon my arrival at Bath, I was surprised to find Fanshaw and his wife, who had offered the compliment of their attendance. It seems Mrs. Fanshaw had heard so much of old Desburgh, that she would not let him go without her :— so you see all folks are not so fastidious as you are. — I wish you had gone, and then all this would not have happened. They took up their abode at the — Hotel, and I went there too. The Colonel fixed the 2d of August for the ce-

remony of the christening, which was to take place in the Abbey at twelve o'clock ; — for he chose to have it performed in the church, he said, because he thought it much more decent than in a private house. To our great astonishment, Mrs. Desburgh excused herself from attending it, which I saw hurt the old gentleman ; and I fancy it had been the subject of discussion before we went there, for there was a smile of triumph and determination from her to Eliza, who said she would stay at home with her sister.

“ Mrs. Fanshaw, General Danvers, a very gentlemanly man, a crony of the Colonel’s, and myself, were sponsors, and with the Colonel went in Fanshaw’s carriage. He walked ; and the child was carried by the nurse. We wanted to take it with us, or to send the nurse and her Charge in a chair, but the Colonel, as in a former case, thought he should have ‘ changes enough.’ He added, with great self-complacency, ‘ I warrant

I was carried to church ; and if my boy is as hale as I am at my age, I'm sure it will not be by coddling him.'

" I saw the wife and sister give a spring from the window as we drove off, as if in delight at our departure. While on our way, the Colonel, with great exultation, fumbled in the long pocket of his regimental waistcoat, (for he was full dressed on the occasion,) and presented each of us with a small parcel, which he said he hoped we would accept as a mark of his regard, and of the christening of his dear boy. We opened our packets, and found each contained a round red box, in which was a very valuable diamond ring."

" It is very provoking you were not there : — I don't think I have ever shown you my mother's jewels : — I intended to present you with them upon the birth of my son ; but that idea must sleep for some time, — it is really very tiresome.

" The service passed, and I dare say

the Colonel thought he had liberally remunerated the clergyman (who, by the bye was none of the best) with half-a-guinea : — however, he made his bow and said nothing. The clerk received only one shilling, which agreeing very ill with the figure we cut in Fanshaw's gay equipage, — from which no doubt he had appropriated in his own mind the half-guinea given to his superior to his own pocket — was not so passive. He followed the party to the carriage, and indecently began abusing the Colonel, who for some time did not notice it : at last, however, ‘ You rascal,’ said he, ‘ the next time I'll not give you half as much.’

‘ Next time !’ replied the man with an ironical smile, ‘ no, I don't believe you will ; and you need not have troubled us now, I reckon, if you had not had a friend at court.’

“ The innuendo possibly was unheard,

at least it was unheeded by our friend, and we drove off.

" Fanshaw, who seems to have an unaccountable pleasure in doing odd things, now ordered the carriage to our hotel, where Mrs. Desburgh and Eliza had promised him to meet us; but they were not arrived, so it was sent to Queen Square for them: it returned, however, empty — the ladies had left home the instant we drove away.

" We found a splendid breakfast laid out; but it was not etiquette to sit down to it without them; and the Colonel was very uneasy. He proposed setting out in search of them: this at first was interdicted, fearing, at that rate, they might be running after each other all day. But when we had waited half an hour in suspense, and the child began to cry, he and Fanshaw set off. They had not gone far, when they perceived the ladies walking very fast in the opposite direction to their own house: they

were exceedingly heated by the exercise; and the Colonel, fearfully alive to any thing which could hurt the boy, would not let her go near him, till she was cool. — Eliza made some trifling errand an excuse for their absence, and the party sat down to the repast, to which they did due honour.

“ The veteran seemed to think Fanshaw had paid him a great compliment by the entertainment, when really I should have thought it an implied reproach.. I should never have dreamt of doing such a thing.

“ At three they left us, and we met again in Queen Square at six, where the Colonel has taken a house for a month, and which at this season, I suppose, he gets for a trifle. We there found a handsome entertainment of one course, or if there were two, it was not done as we have it. The wine was of the same sort as we had before, and quite excellent. It passed very pleasantly, and the

Colonel was in high glee. The ladies left us soon after dinner, which the old gentleman apologised for, as necessary for a nurse, and nothing more was thought of it.

" About nine, there was a loud rapping at the street-door, which was followed by several succeeding ones. The Colonel seemed surprised, and we went into the drawing-room, where we found, and evidently to his great astonishment, a large party, and amongst the rest, Sir John and Lady Neerdowel, and, seemingly of their party, Mrs. Langton.

" Fanshaw immediately went up to his wife, and soon after she complained of indisposition, and he took her away; but he himself returned, and told me he did not think the company such as he chose her to associate with.

" I have since learnt that the Neerdowels and Mrs. Langton were travelling from one place to another; and being now on their road, they contrived to humour Sir John Neerdowel's strong inclina-

on to join the party upon this occasion. Eliza had given Mrs. Langton information of the appointed day — for these ladies always corresponded. — Mrs. Desburgh dared not mention them to her husband, for she knew the consequence would be the doing away with the whole party: and it was to their hotel they went in the morning to ascertain if they were arrived in Bath, that the ladies had been so much upon the alert. And here again I have to notice the Quixotism of Fanshaw. He saw Lady Neerdowel — Miss Baglow that was — quite deserted; so he devoted himself to her during the evening, and appeared as much interested by the history of her vulgar connections, as if he had the disgrace of belonging to them himself. He danced with her, — for to the evident consternation of the old man we had a band of music, and there was a supper prepared.

“ The Colonel folded his arms, walked about the room, and seemed in great dis-

tress: ne never spoke to any gentleman of the company except his own party. At last I saw him go out of the room, and I followed; but he turned back : — ‘ Forgive me, sir,’ said he, in great agitation, ‘ and pray leave me — I will return to you presently.’

“ He came back in half an hour, and then appeared perfectly calm. His wife was dancing with great spirit with Sir John Neerdowel, — indeed they were inseparable during the whole evening.

“ I watched the veteran’s countenance, and I found that it was only by a great effort that he kept master of himself. And I firmly believe, that had it not been for the fear of fretting his wife, and thereby hurting his child, he would have made no ceremony of showing the door to the whole party.

“ General Danvers, and Fanshaw, myself, and the Colonel, went by his desire down to the supper-table, where we each took a couple of glasses of wine;

and when we had done, he very carefully locked up the decanters, saying, ‘ Those gentlemen who intrude themselves unasked to my house may find their own wine.’

“ How they managed I know not — we came away ; but I dare say Mrs. Desburgh did not escape a fine trimming.

“ I really wonder how Sir John Neerdowel dared to present himself there, of all places. Next morning we made the farewell call, but had no opportunity of hearing particulars.

“ The Fanshaws desire their kind regards to you, she is really a sweet woman. I asked them to accompany me home, but it is very well they did not, considering the disappointment I met with, and the confusion of the

“ And the illness of my daughter,” said Mrs. Mordant.

“ Of course,” said he, “ I meant that.”

CHAP. V.

O thou most base and glutinous.

Troilus and Cressida.

A Stage Coach Adventure.

MR. TREVILLYAN informed his wife that he had written to put off the Desburgh visit till she was better, but that he thought in a fortnight she would be ready to receive them. She reluctantly consented, for as Miss Eliza Dennison and the nurse and child were included, her mother's room would be necessary; and it was a great grief to her, to lose her for such successors — although she would have been delighted to have had the Colonel alone.

Her health improved daily, and on the eve of that fixed for Mrs. Mordant's departure, she exerted herself to appear

cheerful and happy. The mother saw it was an effort, and when the carriage came to the door next morning, felt dissatisfied and unhappy.

"My dear Madam," said this amiable young woman, "you must take back Felix : either keep him yourself, or send him to his first master ; it is not proper that I should indulge myself by petting him." — The faithful little creature heard his name, and ever attentive to her voice, sprang upon her knees. She fondly caressed him, and then put him into the carriage. Mr. Trevillyan accompanied them, and they drove off.

Mrs. Mordant had always thought highly of her daughter, but she seemed to rise upon every trial. She pressed her to her bosom, and shed many tears at parting. Mr. Trevillyan asked why Felix was to go : his wife could not trust herself to speak just then, and Mrs. Mordant readily answered, that the dog had been left to her as some little com-

pensation for the companion she had lost in his mistress.

Men are the most unaccountable creatures! Mr. Trevillyan had been frequently jealous of the attentions bestowed on this spaniel, and many a time would have gladly seen him consigned to the Thames: yet now that he found his wife could spare him — could herself propose to part with him, he began to think he might as well stay behind. But Mrs. Mordant entering into the feelings, and reverencing the heroism of her daughter, resolved to carry him off.

Our friend John Harding was present during this conversation; and knowing how fond his mistress was of him, earnestly examined her countenance.— John was no bad physiognomist, and he determined the dog should return.

He knew the driver of the chaise which went on with the lady, bribed him to bring it back, and the next day sent a countryman upon whom he could

depend, to take charge of him from thence to the Hall, after giving him full instructions how to act in all likely emergencies.

The following morning, Mr. Trevillyan went to his stables before breakfast to see a favourite horse, and being up earlier than usual he sauntered farther.— When some way from the house, he was very much surprised to see little Felix scampering up to him as fast as he could put his feet to the ground. The countryman had seen him at a distance, and according to the instructions received, he put down the dog in the midst of the dirtiest place he could find, and well sprinkled him with mud.— Felix well knew the spot, and he assisted the stratagem by taking the straight road.— Muddy or dry, it was all one to Felix; and by the time he reached his master, his dirty jacket might well justify the idea of his having travelled many miles.

He saluted him most joyfully, leaving

many a mark of his affection on his white trowsers. This, however, was of no consequence. Mr. Trevillyan was quite pleased with the animal; he immediately took him home, and John Harding kept a grave face, as he often afterwards heard his master extol the extraordinary sagacity of the dog, who had found his way thirty miles of a road he had never seen in his life. However, this incident procured for the magnanimous Felix a permanent home with his mistress, who could hardly command her emotion at the re-appearance of her favourite. *Mute* he was not,—she was much more mute than he; but if her joy was less loud, it was not less sincere:

Mrs. Mordant missed the dog five minutes after the post-boy had stolen him. People were dispatched in every direction, and the inn was searched for him. She enquired for the lad that drove her, who, in the most simple and innocent manner imaginable, firmly denied any

knowledge of him, although he had but the moment before fastened him up in the hay-loft.

Lying, we believe, is one of the very few fashions which has escaped the influence of time; and we have certainly done due honour to our grandmother Eve, the first inventor of it, by retaining the custom in its pristine purity ever since.

Mrs. Mordant loved the dog herself; but the value her daughter attached to it, made her doubly uneasy. She staid at the inn that night; and as there were no tidings of him, she sent a letter to Eldrington by the first post, to announce the disaster, and to request their exertions to recover him. She then proceeded on her road, and was met by her son, who was exceedingly vexed at the account she gave of his sister.

He had seen Henry Fortescue, from whom he had learnt the history of their meeting: he had also managed to break the happy information of his darling son's

safety to the old man, and his joy was beyond expression. But he, as well as all of them, deeply regretted the precipitancy with which they had acted in regard to Clara's marriage.

The next day, the carriage was dispatched from the Hall to meet the Desburgh family, who were to arrive by the stage-coach, and to be set down at a small inn two miles off by the road side, at a certain hour.

When they arrived at Eldrington, the Colonel appeared in high spirits ; and after the usual greetings, he gave them the history of their stage-coach adventures.

" We took the whole of the inside places, for I considered, that though a chaise would be cheaper, yet it would hardly be possible for four of us and my boy to cram into it for a long journey ; but I ordered a good veal pye to eat on the road, to save charges, and I brought a bottle of my fine old Madeira. The pye

was put into a basket, and the bottle into a pocket of the coach.—When we came to the inn where the passengers dine, the ladies proposed a walk, while the outside people ate. I stayed to protect our things ; but the master of the inn came and assured me that nothing should be touched, and that he would be answerable for the safety of it all.—Finding my long legs somewhat cramped, I was glad to stretch them ; so I alighted and followed the ladies, telling the coachman to take us up on the road, which he did in about half an hour. The first thing I did, was to put my hand in the pocket, to feel if my bottle was safe ; — I felt it and all the other things were *in statu quo*. Shortly after, we got out our veal pye, and fell to it with good appetites.—Sophy asked for a glass of wine, — I rummaged out the tumbler and the cork-screw, and then brought out the bottle. — But, wonder of wonders ! I found my fine Madeira transformed into dirty water, a

transition by no means to 'our' taste. I immediately called to the coachman, and asked where was my bottle of wine? The fellow answered gruffly, that he knew nothing about it, how should he? and was about driving on, when I again stopped him.—‘ Well, my man, the loss shall be yours as well as ours.—I did intend to give you eight shillings at the end of the journey, considering that you have had some trouble with my child, but not one sixpence of mine shall you see, unless you produce my Madeira.’ This was quite another thing,—coachy now became very civil, said he was two miles on the road, and though he was very sorry that I was served such a trick, hoped I would not saddle him, with the loss, as he protested he had nothing to do with it.—However, I continued firm, and after some demur, he sent a lad from the top of the coach back to the inn for my bottle. The outside gentry began to grumble at the delay, and petitioned me to suffer

the vehicle to proceed. I answered, ‘ settle it with the coachman, he knows my determination — no wine, no money.’ — We waited about three-quarters of an hour, when the lad returned, and brought back my own bottle untouched. — And now a fresh bone of contention arose — the lad held the bottle at bay, protesting he would not yield it up, unless I gave him two shillings for his trouble : — ‘ Not one penny, my lad,’ said I. The little wretch was exceedingly insolent, but I just repeated, ‘ settle it with the coachman ; no wine, no money ;’ and, as much time had been lost, he was happy to get off so well. The bottle was handed in, and the impudent varlet revenged himself by calling me names, which he was welcome to do, — let those laugh that win ; so we opened our wine and enjoyed it more, perhaps, from the trouble we had about it.”

The party laughed heartily at the Colonel’s management, and they soon retired to rest.

Some days were employed in showing the fine country. The ladies amused themselves with the child, who threw to his father's wish ; and the Colonel passed much of his time in the library with Mr. Trevillyan, whom he told, that having made him joint guardian with Mr. Fanshaw to his son, he thought he should also make them his executors : — that he once thought of giving Colonel Danvers that office, but considering him not so hale a man as himself, and thinking young men more proper for the business, he had selected them. He wished to place all things plainly before them, to save future trouble. — He then entered into his own affairs, and Mr. Trevillyan was greatly surprised to find him possessed of large sums, upon which the interest had been allowed to accumulate, until it had doubled the principal. This was his own private fortune, — of that appropriated to charity he was silent : — it was time enough to talk of what was plain sailing.

Seeing his boy just at this moment carried before the windows, he said, " that young rascal has already cost me more than ever I expended upon my own living any three years of my life — wounds and all ; — indeed *they* never cost me much. — And now I think of it, I'll tell you how I managed once.

" Many years ago I fell from a scaling ladder, and broke both my shins; but my heart and spirit were too much engaged in the operations to mind trifles. . I had no time for two days to take off my clothes:— however, at the end of these I could scale no more. I sent for the military surgeon and bid him patch 'em up now ; and, if necessary, he should have the pleasure of attending them properly, when I had more time upon my hands. The block-head chose to reverse the order, for which, had he belonged to Frederic, he would have been shot, and well he deserved it too:—so he laid open the wounds. The consequence was, I had the mortifi-

cation of being sent home as useless, when I would have compromised the future loss of a leg to have stayed.

" When I arrived in London, I determined to have nothing more to do with military rogues who would not obey orders, so I sent for the celebrated Mr. Cline. Now I well knew that these professional gentlemen never take fees from soldiers ; but I wanted to be soon well and enabled to return to my duty, and therefore I wished to engage his particular attention,—so I thought of a stratagem.

" When he came, I showed him both my legs, he looked very blank — said it was a bad job, and so on. I told him they were not half so bad as he thought, and asked him which was the worst ; he answered the right. Very well, said I ; then you take the left, and I'll take this ; and I'll lay you a wager of a piece of plate, of the value of fifteen guineas, that I cure my leg first ; only mind, if I lose, you shall cure it for

me.—He laughed, but very good-humouredly took the bet. He went a round-about way to work, but was very attentive, and dressed it regularly every day. I left mine to nature, washing it as I used to do with my soldiers, when no better assistance was within reach; but I never reported progress to Mr. Cline.

“ ‘ Well,’ said I, one day, ‘ when do you think you will let me join my regiment?’

“ ‘ Oh !’ said he, laughing, ‘ very soon. I and my leg are going on very well, and I’m sure of my wager.—My wife desires it may be a set of egg-cups and stands.’—Meanwhile I was taking off my stocking, and just as he had finished his egg-stand, I popped my leg to his view, nearly skinned over. He seemed much surprised, and equally amused ; and declared, he had seldom met with any one, whose blood was in so good a state as mine :—that when first he saw my legs, he absolutely feared a mortification:—But

to return to my boy,—you have some guess what he will possess when he comes of age. I might make him richer, but I think it very unjust to give the eldest son all, and make the younger children beggars.—Now if your eldest born should be a daughter —”

“ A daughter !” hastily interrupted Mr. Trevillyan, who had never calculated such a possibility, “ a daughter !”

The Colonel, who did not at all enter into his feelings, began to suppose he did not like the proposal he was making, but his host soon undeceived him, by declaring, he should be miserable if such a disappointment, was in store for him ; but that if he had a daughter, he should gladly unite her to his heir.

“ Fair and softly,” said the veteran, “ if your eldest is not a female, perhaps Fanshaw’s may ; and whichever of you have the first girl, to her I commend my son ; provided always, that the young people; when they come of age, choose

to ratify our preliminaries. I approve good discipline in families in every subject but matrimony. A parent has, I think, a right to break off a match, or to recommend one, but not farther."

We often find those who were brought up themselves with the greatest indulgence, are the most arbitrary when they come to have families of their own. Mr. Trevillyan did not acquiesce in the Colonel's observation, but they joined the ladies in good-humour.

They had some invitations to dine out in the neighbourhood, and Mr. Trevillyan's servants thinking themselves and their master somewhat scandalized, by the extraordinary dress and appearance of the Colonel, took every opportunity of apologising for it in the servants' halls where they visited; here they asserted, that he was one of the richest men in the kingdom, wisely judging, that that was a salve and excuse for every eccentricity.

The report was soon spread. He was an early riser, and generally took a stroll before breakfast.

Many were the speculations made on his purse. All the neighbouring poor contemplated an attack upon it, and numbers way-laid him in his morning rambles.

Fabricated tales of distress met him on all sides. Soldiers' widows, — soldiers' children, — soldiers' wives, — one would have supposed the whole country to have been stocked with military men only.

He was not deterred by the numerous impositions he detected, from investigating the truth of others. It was quite amusing to observe the penetration and sagacity he discovered in cross-questioning all the supplicants : those few that he found really deserving, he liberally relieved ; but no prayers could extort a sixpence for those who had once attempted to deceive him.

Finding the first story would not do,

the same people dressed out another ; and prepared themselves for examination : but, however altered the dress, however changed the voice, he always knew them again.

He never mentioned at the Hall the adventures of the morning's walk, until once, with a smile of great exultation, he put a letter into Mr. Trevillyan's hand, as he sat down to breakfast ; " You know something," said he, " of Charles Reynolds. I must tell you, that I met a young woman, two mornings ago, in great distress ; she told me, her father lay very ill, and that they were too poor to get advice for him. I went immediately home with her, and found she had not exaggerated his danger, or their poverty. I went to the poor man's bed ; I thought I recollect ed his features : he soon recognised me, and told me he was the orderly servant of Charles Reynolds's father, and had attended him in all his campaigns.

"The recontre seemed to rouse him ; he grasped my hand as an old friend, and, when a little calm, he told me that Charles had sent him a present every year, while under my protection ; but that he had heard his young master had disobliged me, and that he knew then his resources must be cut off.

" 'I became very ill,' added the old man, and 'my pension could not support myself and five children : the eldest, indeed, is in service, and was returning this morning when you met her, from bringing us her wages, — poor thing !

" 'I left Portsmouth; and came to my own parish for relief.' I was telling the barber, who sometimes comes in to chat with me, that if I knew where Mr. Charles Reynolds was, I was sure he would assist me if he could. He said, he thought he had seen that name in an old newspaper, which was folded round some parcel at home. The next day he brought it, and I read the marriage of the Rev.

Charles Reynolds, rector of —. I was afraid this could not be my young master ; however, I had a letter sent to him, and I may, perhaps, have an answer to-morrow.'

" I was anxious to learn," continued the Colonel, " how fortune and my young friend agreed ; and while I am delighted with his letter, I cannot help reproaching myself for withdrawing from him the means, when he so amply possessed the heart, to do good. But I did not know how amiable he was, and I was a fool for not distinguishing him from the rest. The letter ran thus :—

" My poor Gordon, I have repeatedly written to you at Portsmouth, but receiving no answer, I requested a friend to make enquiries after you ; but they were ineffectual, — nothing could be learnt of you. I am very sorry to hear of your misfortunes, and shall try to get you a cottage in my own parish, as soon as you can be removed. I send you five

pounds for present use ; it is all we have in the house, and I would not lose a post. You think wrong of my benefactor ; it is to him I owe every good I have. Pray write word how you are, and get good advice : you shall have another supply shortly. Believe me, your sincere friend,

CHARLES REYNOLDS.' "

Mr. Trevillyan had not the same toned disposition with the Colonel ; indeed, in many points, they were totally discordant : yet, though he did not enter into the spirit of the letter and circumstance, as the veteran expected, he could not help expressing his satisfaction at Mr, Reynolds's conduct.

CHAP. VI.

She is my goods, my chattels.

Taming of the Shrew.

Convulsions. — Quarrels. — Elopements.

AFTER a visit of nearly six weeks, the Desburghs left Eldrington. Mrs. Trevillyan was more pleased than she expected with the ladies : Mrs. Desburgh, to be sure, was not the fondest mother ; yet there was nothing very negligent either towards her child or her husband. Both the ladies were much admired in the neighbourhood, and appeared well pleased with the style they lived in, and the attention they received.

At Bath, which was the Colonel's favorite place of residence, they found Sir John and Lady Neerdowel and Mrs.

Langton,—a conjunction that boded the Colonel no good; but he determined to keep them and his wife as much asunder as possible: and as he bore no great goodwill to Eliza, whom he considered to be the link of union between these parties, he gave her no invitation to stay with them; so she reluctantly returned to Mrs. Reynolds, although a country-residence, particularly in the family of a conscientious good clergyman, was by no means to her taste in the depth of winter; — but there was no alternative.

The winter passed; — Mrs. Desburgh made many morning visits to the Needwells: she tried hard to extend them to the evening; but a decided negative always followed these attempts. Towards the spring, however, these visits were daily repeated, and, gradually, the whole morning was devoted to them, to the total neglect of himself and his child. The Colonel signified his disapprobation; but finding this had no weight, she issued his

commands, which he expected would be as sacred as those of the Medes and Persians, that she should break off that acquaintance. Mrs. Desburgh declared she would do no such thing; and, moreover, —she would go thiere as often as she pleased, —she would be kept in leading-strings no longer.

Opposition always nettled the Colonel, —he swore he would take her away: she ran up stairs, and soon came down again, with her walking dress on. The Colonel was furious; —“Madam,” said he, “go at your peril!” and his voice intimated that his resolution was taken.

The lady hesitated,—she dared not provoke him; yet she hated the degradation of quietly submitting. Much did she wish for her sister Eliza to assist her in evading the tyrannous mandate; but she wanted no auxiliary: her intriguing disposition was fertile enough in expedients. She wrote to the party, to say she was not permitted to visit them that

morning ; but it should go hard if she did not find means to cheat the "Old One," and see them at night.

The Colonel and his family generally retired to bed at ten o'clock, and so it happened this night. She had prepared her dress; and the moment she was loudly assured by his own mouth, or perhaps nose, and probably by the assistance of both, that he "was" sound asleep, she rose and put it on; and by the connivance of the nurse, who slept in the next room, put herself into a chair, which soon conveyed her to her friends, who had a hearty laugh at her ingenuity. She stayed a couple of hours, and then returned, and quietly took her place unobserved; congratulating herself on the success of her scheme.

This went on for some time. She accompanied the party to the card-rooms, and wherever they could take her.

The Colonel was a hale man, who generally went to bed satisfied with him-

self and those around him. His sense of hearing was not very acute ; and he slept soundly, nor awoke till day-light. He contemplated the apparent obedience of his wife with great complacency, and began to consider how he should reward it. She cheerfully submitted to his hours,—indeed, often anticipated his wish, by herself proposing to retire.

Such suavity of temper was beyond his expectation, and it came home to his benevolent heart. He went to his attorney, and desired him to draw out a rough copy of a codicil for him the next day,—giving her a large sum over and above her jointure ; and he went to sleep that night in unusual good-humour.

Sophy rose, and went out, as usual. Most unfortunately, the boy, who never before had known an hour of serious illness, was suddenly seized with convulsions. The nurse called up the other servant, and instantly sent for medical advice ; but the child grew worse, and cried

lustily ; and, for a wonder, the Colonel awoke. Not finding his wife by his side, he hastily rose ; and, wrapped up in an old military dressing-gown and slippers, he went to the nursery. The physician was there ; and in the contemplation of his suffering infant, he for a moment forgot his wife. Soon, however, the child was rather more composed, and the doctor desired it might be immediately suckled.

The Colonel now turned to look for his wife. The nurse trembled :—she was the accessory, and her character was at stake. She desired the servant to call her, for that she was down stairs. She had before told her where she was, and they had been anxiously watching for her. But the Colonel seemed to have a new idea suddenly burst upon him ; and he said he would go himself to seek her. His search, as we know, was fruitless. He returned to the nursery, and ques-

tioned the nurse so ably, that she gave him all the information she possessed.

It was now past one o'clock :—he requested the medical man would stay with the child till he returned ; and then, arrayed as we have described him, with the only addition of a worsted night-cap, he gave himself to the night-air and the streets of Bath. He soon encountered the watch, who, fearing he was some maniac broke loose from his keepers, stopt him, and asked a few questions very civilly. Our favourite (for we have laboured in vain, if we have not assisted him to the favour of our readers) gave such sane answers, that he let him pass.

He went to Sir John Neerdowel's, which was brilliantly lighted up, and rapped at the door. The servants were carousing down stairs, and, not expecting more company at that hour, sent up a scrub of a boy to open it. The Colonel bolted in, regardless of the exclamation of the boy, who had never before seen such an

object, and made his way up stairs to the room, where there was a numerous company. Upon his appearance, the ladies instantly began screaming,— and certainly they had never screamed at any thing so very extraordinary ;— the gentlemen set up a loud laugh ; and some, supposing it a person dressed out for fun and surprise, clapped their hands, and swore it was inimitably done !—got up to admiration !

The Colonel regarded neither the scream, the laugh, or the encomium. His little sunken eye carefully skimmed round the room, and observing his wife at the loo-table, close to Sir John Neerdowel, he instantly made up to her,— the company giving way to him, as if they feared the contact of an apparition. Most of the party had risen at his entrance ; but Sophy sat still, hoping to be unobserved:

“ Madam,” said he, when he got near

her, and in a loud, firm voice, “ be pleased to walk this way.”

She looked to Sir John for protection, evidently expecting he would defend her: but he had no such intention, and slunk away, as if frightened out of his senses. Finding she relied upon a broken reed, and that the rest of the gentlemen filed off by the example of their host, she rose, and reluctantly prepared to follow him, to the extreme amusement of the company. When the Colonel reached the door, he stood till his wife had passed, and then turned round, and singling out Sir John, called out, “ Despicable wretch! — you shall hear from me early enough to-morrow morning.”

Sir John Neerdowel’s virtues consisted chiefly in his fascinating manners, and his personal grace: he had also great conversational powers. But for the organ of courage, as Dr. Spurzheim would say, he had only that share of it which dared to do wrong. Of personal courage

he had not a grain ;—so he suffered poor Mrs. Desburgh to be led off by her irritated spouse.

The whole company had been exceedingly interested in the scene ; and so silent, that not a word was lost ; but as soon as the door was shut after this happy couple, every one was anxious to give their opinion of it. Most people, who knew her, liked Lady Neerdowle, and condemned Sir John for his devotion to other women, and every one had their own conjectures.

Meanwhile, Colonel and Mrs. Desburgh had a silent walk home ; when there, he took her to the bed-side of her suffering infant, who lay pale and much changed since she left him : the physician still in attendance. Such a scene he thought must awaken her to repentance ;—and if it had done so, no doubt his benevolent indulgence would have been extended. He watched her countenance for some return of maternal tenderness,—in vain.

Rage, disappointment, and despair, had entire possession of her features.—“Unfeeling woman,” said he, “is it possible you can see your child in this dreadful state with indifference?—Oh, God! is it indeed true, that I have been all this time cherishing a creature who is devoid of the commonest virtue of the meanest reptile in existence? Oh, direct me in this hour of trial!”

The physician, judging by his appearance and dress, had regarded him at first as some old doting fool, who was well requited for marrying such a girl; and was much disposed to view the whole incident as one from which he could extract great amusement for himself, and a fund of entertainment for his hypochondriac patients: for we believe many medical gentlemen are aware, that they do much more service to their patients by diverting their ideas from their own complaints, than by any medicines they administer:—hence the

eager desire of news, and the greediness of anecdote, often detected in our modern physician. But Dr. Bardsley was a man of sense and discernment; and soon discovered, through all his agitation, his benevolence and his worth.

They watched together an hour, when the poor child was quieted and soothed to sleep; and having given proper directions for his being fed, wisely judging the mother was in no state to nurse it, and promising to see him early next day, he took his leave.

When the Colonel and his wife were left alone, they regarded each other with equal dread: she had been trying to work herself up to a *proper spirit*, while he had watched over the child.—A sad scene followed:—she tore off her fine clothes; and, to do her justice, no lady educated at Billingsgate could have been more liberal of abuse.

The Colonel was cool and determined: he retorted none of her abuse; but very

decidedly told her he should carry her to a small estate he had in North-Wales, where the goats would teach her a lesson of kindness for her offspring.— She declared, with great violence, that she would not go—no power on earth should make her. He calmly answered, that she had better employ herself in packing her clothes, than in vain opposition; for that they should set out, if he lived, the next evening.

“ What!” said she furiously, “ do you think I married such an old miser as you, to be shut up in a Welsh castle?—I have been immured long enough, I promise you.”

“ Pray then, madam,” said the Colonel, “ what did you marry me for?”

“ Marry you for!—Why, for a carriage, balls, routs, plays,—in short, to stand between me and the gaol-door. Could you ever suppose I would marry you for love? You!” added she, as she scornfully pointed her finger at him.

Any other man would have sworn at her ; but her violence absolutely alarmed him for her senses.

" And now," said the fury, " that I am about it, I'll tell you much more."

" No, no," said the Colonel, interrupting her, " I have heard enough."

" But you *shall* hear it" said she, raised to the highest pitch of passion ; " I will have what revenge is in my power."

" Oh ! hush Sophy, hush,—for the love of Heaven, stop ; — do not let me curse you : if you have no regard for me, forget not your innocent child, nor brand its mother with infamy," said the poor old man, fearful, and apprehensive of what was to come.

" That child," said the wretch, with a laugh, that made all those who heard it shudder, (and the servants took care to be listeners,) " that boy,—that infant that you doat upon with so much fondness, is — none of your's."

Colonel Desburgh gasped for breath ;

and, for some moments, he seemed as if stunned by a sudden fall — totally devoid of recollection ; but he soon recovered, and said, with painful emotion,

“ You have now, Sophy, put the finishing stroke to all intercourse between us ; — and possibly your conduct will to-morrow rid you of a man, who married you from compassion : — nay, start not; I will be heard in my turn. — Your character was lost — gone — I was the only idiot who would not believe the scandalous tale. And had it not been for me, you would have been branded with that infamy which you have now again drawn upon yourself. — After I had offered myself to you, I closely watched your conduct ; — there was much that I did not like ; and had it not been for your extreme attention to me, and your assurances of regard — your apprehensions, even when I hinted any thing like breaking off the match, I never had become your husband. — Your sister marked the alteration

in my conduct : — I consulted her about you, and she said so much in your behalf, that I determined to persevere. — Yet she did not hide; at that time, that a strong rein was necessary ; and I have done all I could to keep you within bounds : — upon your own head, therefore, be your transgressions. Yet, however hardened, however dissipated you may now be, there surely will come a time when the compunctionous visitation of nature will assail you : in those dreadful moments, be it your consolation to remember, that I pity — “ and,” added he with great agitation, “ forgive you ; — and may the Almighty make your repentance the price of your pardon.”

The Colonel then left the lady to the benefit of her own reflections ; but these not being very much to her satisfaction, she amused herself in packing up her clothes, deciding, at all events, that it was impossible for her to stay longer at Bath, to be pointed at by every passenger.

Her husband, meanwhile, settled all his affairs, wrote a letter to Mr. Trevillyan, and another to Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Fanshaw, and a challenge to Sir John, desiring he would meet him at twelve o'clock, at a particular spot.

After all these worldly affairs were settled, he sunk down upon his knees, besought the Almighty to pardon his sins, (there were few who had passed one third of his age with so many active virtues, and so very few transgressions,) and fervently implored forgiveness for his offending wife. Possibly he was now about to commit the only heinous offence of his virtuous life; but he was a soldier, and the military code of honour differs from the moral one. Certain it is, he now considered the event as a soldier, not as a divine; — an inevitable consequence of the occurrences of the preceding evening.

He then went to an attorney, and made some little alteration of his will, in

favour of Charles Reynolds; and then called upon General Danvers, who had not yet risen. However, he went to his bed-side, and acquainted him with what had happened, and requested he would be his second, and send the challenge to Sir John. The General rose instantly:— he was much concerned that his friend should risk his life for such a “jade of a woman;” but there was no help for it. He said he would wait upon Sir John himself, and would meet him at the place appointed, and send him a note in the mean time.

The Colonel, fearing again to trust himself with his wife, lest she should distract the resignation of his mind, in what might very possibly be the last hours of his existence, again went back to the attorney's, took some refreshment, and stayed there till it was near the time for his setting off. He wondered he had no note from the General; but concluded he should meet him at the rendezvous.

The ground was unoccupied. He waited an hour, perhaps the longest he had ever passed, pulled out his watch, and marked the minutes as they went, and enrolled themselves with that measure of time which had gone by, never again to be recalled. There was something of awe rising in his mind, as he raised his eyes to Heaven, and thought how near he was to the end of his earthly race. He had full leisure to indulge this feeling. He sat down, and insensibly the question of what right he had wantonly to dispose of his own, or of another's life, rose in judgment against him ; and, from this moment of deep reflection he discarded the military and adopted the Divine code of honour.

Yet, reader, we do not say that he was so perfect a convert, that had Sir John Neerdowel presented himself and his pistols, at that moment, he would ~~have~~ hesitated to engage them ; but luckily for his virtue, it was not put to the test.

His antagonist came not, sent not, nor was there any appearance of General Danvers.

After waiting two full hours, our hero returned to town, and immediately called upon that gentleman. Great was his surprise, to see him quietly playing at chess. He informed him that he had gone out even before his own breakfast to deliver the challenge; that, upon his enquiring for Sir John Neerdowle, he was informed that he had left Bath that morning suddenly, — no doubt to avoid the duel: — from thence he had gone home and sent a servant with a note to him, which he was much surprised he had not received. The Colonel now for the first time recollects that he had left no direction where to find him; and that he was at the house of the attorney.

After having bestowed many honourable epithets, upon the magnanimous Sir John (never recollecting that he might be visited by the same reflec-

tions as Colonel Desburgh, and possibly quitted the field upon conscientious motives of dreading to take the life of another) they separated.

The Colonel went home to his boy, and to settle affairs relative to the future establishment of his wife. Here, however, another shock awaited him : he observed the dismayed countenances of his servants, and eagerly enquired for his child, — he was well, — the physician had pronounced him out of danger. He asked no more, but proceeded up stairs, — the rooms were vacant, — his wife was not there. He opened her drawers, — they were empty : he then made no doubt she had eloped with Sir John.

Upon enquiry, he found that a porter had been sent for her trunks, and that no message was left for him. He bore the loss with great composure ; indeed, had he only regarded himself, he must have found it a relief ; but he was shocked at her depravity.

He had had a night and a day of continued agitation ; and though a strong man, he was rather an aged Hercules. He therefore took an early supper, kissed his child, and went to sleep with him in his arms.

The next day the boy was quite recovered, and returned his father's caresses with rôws of delight : he took his food readily, nor seemed at all to pine after his unnatural mother.

General Danvers called, and insisted upon his dining with him ; and in talking over old campaigns and youthful frolics, the Colonel lost much of the recollection of his present evils.

The second day brought a letter from Mr. Trevillyan, expressing his regret and sympathy, but excusing his personal attendance; which was impossible in the present situation of his wife, whose unfortunate illness, during the last time he left her, had given him so much disappointment and uneasiness.

Mr. Fanshaw did not write, and

the Colonel was beginning to think him negligent, when he, accompanied by Charles Reynolds, burst into this room. The latter exclaimed, "Thank God, you are safe!" he was heartily glad to receive them, and welcomed them affectionately.

After much consideration, it was settled that the Colonel should return with Mr. Reynolds. At first the good old man declined this, thinking his presence would be a reproach to Mrs. Reynolds; but a most affectionate letter written by her after her husband's departure, assuring him that she deprecated the depravity of her sister, and earnestly requesting his presence with them, when herself and her dear Charles would use every effort in their power for his comfort and the welfare of the dear child, determined him to accept it. Tears of affection came into the eyes of the veteran at the friendship he received,—for of gratitude he allowed no one to talk to him. He paid off his lodgings and servants, and

accompanyèd Mr. Reynolds into Gloucestershire.

Meanwhile Mr. Fanshaw visited Lady Neerdowel, who was just about writing her father an account of her desertion, which she had omitted doing before, as she hourly expected his return, for he had gone without her knowledge, and she did not suppose he meant to leave her.

In the course of conversation, he learnt that every letter she had written or received was subject to the inspection of Sir John ; that she was well convinced many had been suppressed ; that she had been very uneasy at not hearing from home ; and had once taken an opportunity of writing, during the absence of Sir John and Mrs. Langton. To this, however, she received no answer ; and from that time she was never left alone, unless Argusson, his valet, was in attendance ; and she was generally obliged to make one in all their evening parties, and was frequently shocked at their

tevity of conversation, and more particularly so at that part of it addressed to herself; which appeared by ho means unpleasing to Sir John, who laughed at her ignorance of the world, and assured her there was nothing meant. On one occasion, she absolutely suspected that he connived at, and gave opportunities for, a gross misconduct of a friend of his with her; and from this moment she determined firmly to refuse accompanying them.

Mrs. Langton had left the house immediately after Sir John: at first she supposed they had gone off together; but the lady had that morning paid her a visit, and accused him of having swindled her out of a large sum of money, and then told her of Mrs. Desburgh's elopement — no doubt with her husband; for their attachment had been well known before her marriage; and said she wondered she had not seen the glaring improprieties passing between

them. Lady Neerdowel added, that the lady quite forgot her *own* conduct in this way ;—that she told her that Sir John had made away with all her money, and that she was a beggar. “Indeed, sir,” added she, “I have been fretting ever since. I had written many letters yesterday to Highgate ; but I found they would so distress my dear parents, that I burnt them all. Your goodness, sir, to my sister makes me hope you will not leave me in this dreadful state.”

He promised her he would not ; and even offered, if she could be ready by the next morning, to accompany her to town. Her heart bounded with joy at the idea of again seeing her friends, from whom she had often wished she had never been separated.

At an early hour the next day they set off for town, and Mr. Fanshaw, during the journey, entertained her with an account of the scene between Mrs. Langton and her sister ; and she in return

amused him with the history of her Irish expedition. Mrs. Langton did not go there with the Baronet and herself.

In Dublin, Lady Neerdowel was introduced to Sir John's brother, his three sisters, and his aunt, all of whom paid her great attention; but she observed there was no cordiality between them and her husband: and once Mr. Neerdowel (the brother) had questioned her very closely upon the subject of her settlement, of which she was quite ignorant. They all appeared to compassionate her; but Sir John not feeling quite at his ease, they only made a short stay.

CHAP. VII.

And swore, with his own single hand
He'd take us in.

Cymbeline.

A Hoax.

It was a beautiful day in June that our travellers arrived at Highgate, where the family had been apprised of their approach by Lady Neerdowel's letter. They had had many apprehensions upon her account; not that any lack of correspondence had alarmed them, for Sir John had written often himself. They had sent them frequent invitations to Highgate, ~~and~~ were at this time meditating to surprise them with a visit, when Lady Neerdowel's letter arrived.

They received their child with open arms, and Mr. Fanshaw with many expressions of gratitude.

Mr. Barlow had, ever since his first suspicions of Sir John's integrity, bitterly deprecated his own folly, which had allowed him, for the sake of what his wife termed a grand alliance, to consent to marry his daughter to a man of whom he knew so little, and so much less of his circumstances : and, like many other people, glad to find other shoulders to burthen with his own errors, he had not unfrequently upbraided her with forwarding the match, from her foolish love of ostentation.

The poor woman felt too much and too severely the unhappiness of her child to need any aggravation ; and this frame of mind, and the experience she had, led her to think more favourably of Mr. Lacket, who was now admitted at the house ; and although it was only upon honour, that he was nothing more

than a mere visiting acquaintance, yet, insensibly, he became a constant guest, whenever the business of the office allowed of his absence.

Mr. Barlow observed him narrowly, and he rose daily in his estimation ; and he acknowledged, in his own mind, that this marriage was likely to turn out much more happily than the other.

Our friend, Mrs. Samuel Barlow, happened to be a visitor at Highgate at this time ; and she was by no means sorry to renew her acquaintance with Mr. Fanshaw.

Our travellers being somewhat fatigued with their journey, they retired early. Mr. Fanshaw, ere he went to rest, wrote his wife an account of all that happened.

After breakfast next morning, he and Mr. Barlow proceeded to business : the latter proposed, that he should, in his daughter's name, commence a suit against Sir John ; but when Lady Neerdowel was consulted, she could not be induced to consent to it ; she said, "she had

loved him, and could never be brought to appear in court against him."

• Mr. Fanshaw honoured her for her high notions of propriety, and wondered how, in the school she had been educated, she should have imbibed so much delicacy. Lucky, indeed, it had been for these girls, that Miss Fenning's reign was so short; — during it, they gave themselves up to her guidance, and copied her manners; but when her influence ceased, they returned to their natural good principles, and propriety of conduct.

Mr. Fanshaw now proposed the union of his youngest daughter with Mr. Lacket, and said, that he had the promise of a place, with a pension of eight hundred a year for him, with certain prospect of promotion.—Mr. Barlow wished to postpone it for a few months longer, and so it was settled.

After having arranged all these subjects much to his satisfaction, Mr. Fan-

shaw went into the drawing-room, where he found Mrs. Samuel Barlow alone. Mr. Barlow went to town to fetch Mr. Lacket, to dine with his patron.

The lady of the house was closeted with her two daughters, hearing the ill-treatment her ladyship had received, and giving family anecdotes of what had occurred during her absence; all of which were interesting subjects to them. Mrs. Samuel, however, was not averse from a *tête-a-tête* with Mr. Fanshaw.

" Well, sir," said she, " what a sad match this has turned out! — only for me to think of it,—here is twenty thousand good pounds thrown to the dogs. I always said what it would come to. What pretensions had John Barlow to look for one of the nobility to marry his daughter? I always said, I hoped my Suky would marry a gentleman, leave alone high folk: however, they cannot rob her of her title, that is one thing she has got for it;—and her son, if it is a

son, will be a *Sir* too ; and they tell me, that even if she was to divorce him, it is her's all the same, — once a lady, always a lady.

" Now, for a say so ; suppose she was to marry my son Ned, — and odder things have happened, — she would be Lady Ned Barlow. I declare I think it would sound vastly well. I am sure we ought to get something to make up our loss by that Sir John."

She then proceeded to give Mr. Fanshaw the following history, which, though much more laughable in her own mode of telling it than ours, we fear our elegant readers would be tired of her language, and disgusted with her mutilation of their own tongue ; but we beg to refer them to our preface, and when they find how great, how rich, how powerful, this family is at the present moment, we trust to their goodness in forgiving them, that they ever moved in a lower sphere.

She informed him then, that her

daughter, Miss Sukey, being rather “puny like,” the apothecary had ordered country air; and that, therefore, they had taken a house in the City-road, which was a very pleasant walk for the delectable Ned, who used to dine with them at five o’clock.

One Saturday, they had just sat down to dinner, in Saturday’s proper costume; that is, in dishabille themselves, and a table-cloth which mourned for soap. At the head of the table was a dish of bubble-and-squeak,—at the foot, a toad in the hole. With this delicious repast, our friends were regaling, while the music of Betty’s scrubbing-brush saluted their ears from the outside the room, when a thundering rap was heard at the street-door. Many were the conjectures it occasioned.

“ Law!” says Ned, “ did ever any body see such a table-cloth! I declare it is quite beastly;—I wonder you should have such things.

"Never mind the table-cloth," returned the mother, "who would have a clean table-cloth on a Saturday, I wonder?"

"And then, Betty," says Ned, "she is as black as if she had been up the chimney."

"Dear me, Ned," returned she, "you are mighty nice all of a sudden, — you would never have remarked all this but for the knock ; but I wonder what Betty is about, that she don't go."

Just then, Betty thrust in her greasy face, and said, "La ! mistress, here's Sir Marcus Somerby, — such a fine man ! and he says he's come from your newy, Sir John, and wants to speak with you immediately."

"Where the devil have you left the gentleman ?" said Ned.

"I left him at the door, to be sure," answered the girl : but just then she saw the gentleman close at her heels, — and in he went.

Master Ned had advanced to meet him, and Mrs. Barlow was thinking what she should do to hide a very filthy apron, (for she had been assisting her only servant, Betty, in the domestic arrangements of the house,) so she untied it, and dexterously contrived to let it slip down to her feet, and then gave it a kick under the table.

Sir Marcus Somerby, as she was pleased to call him *, (in reality, Major Semple Lisle,) was the most gentlemanly man in the world: — he had been the companion of princes; his manners were peculiarly graceful and easy; and his plausibility so great, that, unless prepared, it was next to impossibility to suspect him.

Before such a man as this, our party felt themselves nothing; — but his courteous demeanour soon reconciled them to themselves.

* The name he chose to assume was that of the Irish baronet, Sir Marcus Somerville. This, as well as most other stories in this book, is true.

" I am, Madam," said he, " Sir Marcus Somerville ;" — and he spoke it so quick that they understood him, *Marquis*.

Mrs. Barlow was ransacking her brain to 'know' how to call a *Marquis*, — whether it should be, *My Lord*, or *Your Grace*; — but her apt son Ned spared her the trouble of much thinking: — he held out his hand, and said, " he was very glad to see his Lordship's *Marquis*." She then took courage, and pointing to the table, said, " Pray, *Sir Lord Marquis*, won't your Grace sit and peck a bit, — we have but just begun."

Sir Marcus found it impossible to help smiling; but he was never off his guard: — he said, " he had left his carriage a short distance off, not knowing the house; that he was on his road to Highgate, to dine with Mr. Barlow, and had taken the opportunity of calling, to say he had left Sir John and Lady Nerdowell quite well; that he had dined with them the day before he left Dublin;

and that he had the pleasure to tell them, that he had brought over two pieces of beautiful stuffs for Mrs. Samuel, and something very pretty for Miss Suky."

The young lady, forgetting her deference for the great Marquis, in her anticipation of his fine present, clapped her hands, and jumped for joy.

Mrs. Barlow exclaimed, "I am very glad she hav thought of her poor aunt.— My niece, Sir Marquis, was always a good and generous girl, and very fond o' me, poor thing!— And so your Grace have brought me some goevnūs!— are they in your lordship's pocket?"

Sir Marcus, great as wæs his self-command, had never more difficulty to smother a laugh.— "No, madam," says he, "they are not come to town yet, I expect them to-morrow; I never lose time upon the road, but travel as fast as four post-horses can carry me, and leave one of my servants to take care of my baggage.— I hope to send them to-morrow evening,

or next morning. — Madam,’ said he, with one of his most graceful bows, “ I wish you good morning.”

“ Sir Lord Marquis,” said Mrs. Barlow, “ I should have taken it very kind, if you had taken a mouthful with us.”

“ Mother,” says Ned, “ the Marquis’s Lordship will, perhaps, take a snack with us when he brings your gownds.”

“ Very true, Ned ; of any day next week, if your Lordship’s Grace will just tip us a bit of a line a day or two before, that we may have things in a little order ; for our Ned likes to have things a little genteel ; and you’ll find, that though he has been bred up to the oil trade, he knows what’s what.—And now I’m thinking of that, if your lordship’s custom is not engaged, we shall be very happy to serve you with the best sperm as can be burnt, and we would not mind the trouble of sending all the way to your house, to oblige your Grace !

Major Semple, alias Sir Marcus, in-

dulg'd himself with a laugh, and said he should be very glad to employ them ; but he was in haste now, and would settle it next time he had the pleasure of seeing them.

He was now leaving the room, and putting his hand in his pocket, exclaimed with great apparent discomposure, — “ I have done a very careless thing ! — I was feeling for a trifle to give your servant ; when I find, to my great concern, that I really have not half-a-crown about me ; for in changing my travelling dress, I left my purse in it, and never thought of it till this moment. It is too late to send to Berkley-square ; for I shall be keeping Mr. Barlow’s dinner ; and I would not be so rude, upon any account. — Could you be so good to lend me five pounds ? I can’t possibly go without money ; and I am perfectly unknown in this part of the world.”

“ O dear yes, your Grace,” said Mrs. Samuel, “ to be sure we can ; we have always plenty of money.” — So she went

to a cupboard, and took from it a china punch-bowl, where, under a large saucer turned the reverse way, there were a number of bank-notes, all folded backwards,—which she held to the self-created Sir Marcus, and bid him help himself. He was surprised, and looked at her, and then at it; which Mrs. Barlow interpreted as astonishment, that they should have so much; so she told him “not to be afraid, but to help himself, for she had plenty more;” and, lifting up the paper, discovered fifty guineas underneath.

Sir Marcus, with many professions of obligation, counted out five of the notes, taking great care to show what they were; but Mrs. Barlow, with the utmost simplicity, told him “that he did not know how much he may want, and that he had better take ‘tother five pounds.”

He looked at her again; and, if she could have read his thoughts, she would, most likely, have seen—“what an egregious fool you are, to be so easily duped!”

but he had the conscience to refuse more, shook her by the hand, and made his retreat. But Mrs. Barlow happened to recollect, that Betty may as well have her present as not : so she hastened after him, and put ten shillings into his hand, and hurried back to the parlour again ; and Ned, tutored by the wink of his mother, followed her ; otherwise, no doubt, he would have tried to attend his “ Grace’s Lordship” to his carriage, and somewhat incommoded him by his officious attention.

As soon as he was gone, “ La !” said Mrs. Barlow, “ what a fool I was ! why, Suky, girl, you might have rode in his lordship’s grace’s carriage to your uncle’s ; they would have been very glad to see you ; — and who knows ! perhaps you might have made a better match than your cousin, Lady Neerdowel, and taken *purcedence* of her,— you might have been Lady Marquis. — I wish you had gone, only that gawnd was so dirty.”

" Well, mother," replied Suky, " and whose fault was it, pray, that I had it on? you would not let me put on my blue one, 'cause you said it was Saturday; but, next time, I'll put on what I like, that I will!"

" Well," says Ned, " one may always know a lord; there's something so noble in his very look: what a fine shirt he had on!"

" Aye, and," says Suky, " did you see what a fine pocket-handkerchief he pulled out?—none of your cambrie muslin, like your's, Ned, but the *rale* thing itself;—if I was you, Ned, I'd have some too; it's they things that makes the gentleman."

Ned observed, that the dress of his Marquisship was very unlike that of his Oxford cousin,—it was not so dandy, or sparkish.

Mrs. Samuel regretted, that it was then too late to go to her neighbour, Mrs. Tret, in the city, to tell her of the visi-

ter they had had ; but she said she would go to her own church, Saint Dunstan's, on the marrow, and there she should meet all her neighbours, and make them stare by the recital of her grand acquaintance. Accordingly, the next day, she and her darling Suky, attended by Ned, dressed in a very different suit from that of the preceding day, sallied forth to church, where she met, many of her neighbours. One said, " Dear me, Mrs. Barlow, I thought you had taken a house at the west end of the town." — Another said, " Who'd have thought of seeing you here ! " — And another, " Why I thought you spent your Sundays at Highgate ! " Mrs. Samuel was exceedingly civil to all ; yet there was evidently a something of self-consequence about her, that her neighbours felt she assumed.

After church, it was the etiquette of the neighbours to visit each other : Mrs. Samuel went to her friend Mrs. Tret's, the grocer ; and when she saw the room

tolerably full, she spoke of her visiter, Sir Marquis Somerby ; and every ear was attentive : — she then said, she had received by him, a present from her niece, Lady Needowel, of Irish stuffs and poplins ; and that she expected he would dine with her some day that week. — A marquis dine with their neighbour Mrs. Samuel Barlow ! !

When she had excited as much astonishment as suited her ambition, she left her neighbours to talk it over and spread the news ; little thinking that she was making herself so many encimies. She then returned home.

Monday came ; and Ned, when he left them to go to the shop, desired his mother to behave very handsomely to the footman, and give him a shilling for his trouble ; and to be careful that Betty should look clean when she opened the door ; for that “nothing made the house look so bad as a dirty servant.”

Madam Barlow, Suky, and Betty,

were therefore clean by times on the Monday morning ; and the two former seated themselves at an open window, watching, with eager anxiety, every one that passed. — Whenever a livery servant appeared in view, he was certainly the footman of his Grace's Lordship : — whenever a fine carriage came in sight, it was surely his Lordship's Grace himself.

Alas ! neither Grace or carriage or servant stopped there ; — and it was very provoking, because Ned had sent a man from the shop, who had sometimes acted as footman, to perform the same office on this occasion.

Great was their disappointment ; — but, no doubt, Tuesday would be the day ; — possibly the baggage may not have arrived. — Tuesday passed, and no better success — Wednesday — Thursday ; aye, all the week. Luckless Mrs. Barlow was seen at the window, with Miss Suky, watching every day, and all with the like success. Much did she wish to go to

Highgate, to consult her brother John, but she feared to be absent when the Marquis came.

Ned had looked in the Court-Guide, for all the houses in Berkeley Square; but no such name as his appeared. At last, they held a consultation; and, as nobody seemed to know the name distinctly, they called in Bet'y, who said it was "Sir Marcus Somebody."

"Somebody?" said Mrs. Samuel; "I hope he has a name."

"Sure as death," says Ned, "I have heard of a grand gentleman as belonged to the Prince: I forget his name; but they do say, he is the finest man of them all; — and he goes about swindling people out of their money. — I should not wonder, mother, if you had been finely taken in."

This greatly alarmed Mrs. Samuel; who instantly put on her bonnet, and away she tramped to Highgate; and, meeting with Mr. Barlow, she told him

the story, and asked the residence of his lordship.

Mr. Barlow laughed so heartily, that it was some time ere he could speak ; which irritated the lady, who told him, she thought it was no laughing matter. He appeased her as well as he could, and then told her he had seen no one from Lady Neerdowle, nor heard from her for some weeks ; and that no marquis had ever been in his house.

Great was her dismay ;—there was five pounds ten shillings lost,—gone ; and nothing to show for it ! — And besides that, she had bragged at neighbour Tret's of the dresses ; and was frightened out of her wits, lest she should be found out : so she cautioned Ned not to mention it ; for that it was better “to *bide* by the loss, than have that and the laughter too.”

It was pity these things did not earlier occur to Mrs. Samuel's mind ; it

was rather of the latest to adopt prudent measures now.

The shopman, who was in waiting to open the door to his Grace's Lordship, told the whole story to Mr. Tret's porter; — he told it again to his friends; and it soon came to the ears of their employers.

Mrs. Barlow was surprised one morning, to receive a levee of her city neighbours; who, one and all, begged to see the fine things the marquis had brought from Lady Neerdowle. Mrs. Barlow fidgetted about, made fifty excuses; and, at last, stammered out, that they were at her dress-maker's.

Something now must be done to escape exposure: so the next day away went Suky, and her mamma, to Grafton-house, — and there seeing a pretty mock tabby, they bought it, and had it made up for church the next Sunday. Being rather too early, she chatted with some of her acquaintance; who exceedingly

admired her beautiful dress, which they took to be real ; when, as ill luck would have it, the abominable Mrs. Tret, the grocer's wife, came up in a dress, 'the exact fellow of her's, absolutely cut off the same piece. -- Was ever any thing so provoking !

At that moment, Mr. Tret joined them : " Well, Mrs. Barlow," said he, " so I find you have been finely taken in !"

Poor Mrs. Samuel !—so many mortifications at once were enough to overpower her ; but she took the most politic side of the question, and joined in the laugh against herself with great good-temper ; and thus disarmed the malicious triumph of her neighbours ; — but the story will not be forgotten by them in haste. How it came to be known, was more than she could account for ; but the sapient Ned soon detected the channel of information ; and poor Betty was called in, and a severe reprimand given her, followed up by a dissertation on the absurdity of bragging.

CHAP. VIII.

se men ne'er sit and wail their loss
t cheerly seek how to red~~ess~~ their harms.

Henry VI.

Out-witted.

ALL these circumstances made them the more inveterate against Major Semple; and young Barlow swore, if ever he set eyes on him again, he would match him, let his ingenuity be ever so great. He “wondered how his mother had been so easily duped;” he “thought at the time she was very liberal with her purse.” He “would like to see him attempt to dupe him.”

A fortnight afterwards, Ned went to Hanover Square, to try to get payment of a long-standing account; and, just at the corner of George-street, he met the identical marquis walking alone.

His courage mounted high, he went up to him, and seizing him by the sleeve, “ You rascal,” says he, “ where is the five pounds you swindled my mother out of ’tother day?”

“ Really, sir, you have the advantage of me,” coolly answered Semple; “ and as I suppose you must be ignorant whom you are addressing in this style, I’ll trouble you to stand off, or I may teach you what it is to meddle with your superiors.”

Ned was somewhat intimidated by the lofty air the gentleman assumed; yet, assured that he had the right bird in hand, he did not choose to let it go.— However, he released his hold; and Major Semple then first pretended to recollect him — “ Mr. Barlow, I believe,” said he; “ I protest, at first sight, I did not recollect you.’ I do confess, my dear sir, appearances are somewhat against me; yet let me give you one caution — try to suit your manners *as nearly as you can* to those you deal with. I cannot

be displeased with you for your mistake just now ; because, had it been more public, it could have done me no injury : I am too well known in this part of the town, to have my character doubted ; but to yourself, it might be of great consequence. You are a very promising young man ; and, I dare say, with a little introduction to ~~gehtel~~ life, will make your way in the world with great success. But now to business : — my carriage broke down on the road to Highgate. I was very much hurt, and conveyed home so ill, that yesterday was the first day I could move out ; so that my baggage was not unpacked : but I have this morning written to your good mother, and thankfully returned her the five pounds ten shillings she so kindly lent me, and sent her her stuffs, and a parcel for your sister ; I think, too, there was something for you, if your name is Edward.”

“ Yes it is,” said Ned, eagerly.

" Ther, my dear sir, I should think my servant must be near your house by this time : — no, I protest," added he, looking to the north side of the square, " the lazy rascal is just now going ; I really must turn the idle fellow away, — only look how deliberately he walks ; if I was not in haste to go another way, I'd make him go a little faster."

" Which is he ?" hastily enquired Ned.

" Don't you see him ? — that with the white coat, faced with scarlet and gold. You can easily overtake him, and satisfy yourself that all is right."

" That I will," says Ned, " so don't be angry, and shake hands." This done, away went Ned, as fast as he could scamper, and soon overtook the servant, who fortunately had a large parcel in his hand.

" Stay, my good lad," said he, " be so good to let me see that parcel. I am just come from his lordship's marquis,

and he told' me to follow you, and see for a small parcel inclosed in that for one Edward Barlow."

" Thank ye, friend," said the servant; " but I am a wee too far north, for that : — I don't belong to no marquis ; but perhaps to much better people."

Ned then learnt, to his extreme mortification, that the footman belonged to a lady in Portland Place, and had been sent for a parcel from Old Bond-street, with which he was returning.

Exceedingly provoked, he now ran to the spot where he had left the marquis ; who, however, had taken to his heels with as much alacrity as Ned had done, whilst thinking he pursued his present.

Mr. Fanshaw was very highly amused, and laughed immoderately at Mrs. Barlow's tale, heightened, as it was, by her odd remarks. He told her, he trusted she never would forget that story.

" Why," said the flattered lady, " Ned,

he don't like to hear of it ; but I say, such a man as that would cheat the devil himself, leave alone Christian folk ; and brother John did so enjoy it, when first he heard it, that I was a'most offended with him ; but he said, ‘ Don't be angry, sister-o-mine, no one can possibly hear you tell that story, without laughing ; you make one of the best stories I ever heard ; ’ and he makes a point of always asking for it, whenever any strangers are here.”

They were now joined by the rest of the party, and Mr. Lackét, who was very happy to get an opportunity of expressing his gratitude to his benefactor : they retired for a few minutes, when Mr. Fanshaw had the pleasure of surprising him, by informing him that he was going to town the next day, when he hoped to get him the immediate possession of a much more lucrative situation than that he held at present ; that he was highly satisfied with the accounts he had

received of his steadiness, ability, and good conduct ; and, as a climax of all good, assured him, he could promise him a wife in a very few months. Mr. Lacket's thanks were given with the enthusiasm of a lover.

Mr. Fanshaw left him to breathe them to the walls, like the Oxford lectures ; but, thinking he would prefer rather more sensitive auditors for so much eloquence, the young man went in quest of his love, and there a very melting conversation took place. — But as it is now some years since we were either actors or witnesses of love scenes ; — although we beg it may be distinctly understood, and implicitly believed, that time *has* been, when we were nearly persecuted out of our lives, from the constant homage paid to our charms, — we shall leave them to the fertile imaginations of our readers ; and only inform them, that, upon the appearance of the turtle-doves at dinner,

they looked as happy, as if all earthly good was before them.

Mr. Fanshaw enquired after the Oxonian, and learnt that he was now keeping terms. Truth to say, the hero had been so shocked at the low birth, and disappointed at the intriguing spirit of his Dulcinea, with whom he considered himself desperately in love, that he lost his spirits, and returned to his academical chambers ; not to study Greek or Hebrew — the laws of his country, or those of his Maker ; — but to write sonnets, wherein the words *fair* and *frail*, *frail* and *fair*, were to be found in every second line.

We were favoured with the sight of one of these *chef-d'œuvres* ; but we will not detain our readers while we seek it, as it is not immediately at hand.

'After dinner, when Mr. Fanshaw entered the drawing-room, our friend, Mrs. Samuel, sidled up to him, and contriving to

draw him apart, began, — “ Mr. Fanshaw, sir, I want to ask you a question, which, I dare say, you are clever enough to answer me. It is about a word which a tip-top gentleman, who talks vastly well, used at our house ; — but I must tell you how it happened. My son, Ned, invites this clever man to drink tea with us, and play at quadrille ; so, of course, I ordered my best china, and my silver tea-pot ; and when it was all put on the table, and I was making tea, he comes up, and says, ‘ Dear me, Mrs. Barlow ! what a elegant tea hypparatus you have got ! ’ — I thought I had not heard clear ; so I said, ‘ sir ? ’ and he repeated it. I did not like to appear ignorant of what the word meant, so I made a simper, and said ‘ hem.’ — Well, this passed, and the card-table was placed, and when the things was all ready, he says again ; ‘ Why, Mrs. Barlow, what a pretty quadrille hypparatus you’ve got ! ’ — At first I thought it might be a new name for

an urn ; but, then, we had no urn at cards, you know. Well, as soon as he was gone, Suky and me we falls to the *dicksnary*,—we looked H I P and H Y P all through ; but it is not an English dicksnary word. I asked a lady to lend me Johnson, but it air't there. Ned could have told me, I dare say, if he understood Latin ; but, poor fellow ! he don't.—it was no use teaching him that stuff, you know, Mr. Fanshaw."

Mr. Fanshaw found great entertainment in Mrs. Samuel Barlow's stories ; for, although plentifully vulgar yet there was nothing offensive in them ; and they abounded with so much genuine humour and drollery, that he, who dearly loved a laugh, enjoyed them exceedingly. He therefore begged a dictionary, and very good-humouredly showed her the proper word ; and she requested that he would not mention her mistake, as "Mrs. Barlow there was

apt enough to think she was ~~her~~ inferior in education."

Just as they had settled this point, they were joined by Mr. Barlow.—"What now, Mrs. Samuel," said he, "you are telling Mr. Fanshaw some of your stories; but I forgot to ask you, after dinner, for your best one, about his Grace the Marquis."

Mr. Fanshaw said he should ~~laugh at~~ it again, when he told it to his wife; though he despaired of doing it half the justice that she had.

Mrs. Samuel was elated to the highest pitch of ecstasy, the utmost pinnacle of happiness, by Mr. Fanshaw's praise. Turning to her brother-in-law, "John," said she, "you should not call *that* my best story, 'till you've heard one I've yet to tell you."

"What, another!" said John, rubbing his hands, and chuckling with great satisfaction, "pray let us have it."

"Not now," said Mrs. John Barlow,

who just then joined them, “*I want a rubber of whist, and I hope Mr. Fanshaw will make one.*”

Mrs. John Barlow’s will was law in these things; her husband quietly walked to the card-table, and was followed by our hero.

The next morning early he took leave of the family, after the two young ladies had made opportunities for expressing their obligation to him for his kindness; and the old people parted from him with great cordiality, giving many a hospitable invitation to bring his wife there. When he took leave of Mrs. Samuel, he told her not to forget that she was a story in his debt, which she promised he should have when next they met.

He then, according to invitation, went to Mrs. Mordant’s, and there was introduced to Henry Fortescue, who gladly became acquainted with the husband of his favourite play-fellow, Fanny Delaval.

Mr. Fanshaw found himself exceedingly pleased with this interesting young man, that, although his wife expected very shortly to be confined, and therefore would not be able to enjoy his society, he invited him to accompany him back.

Henry, who was heartily tired of himself, and of London, assented ; and his friends were very glad of any thing which afforded a change of scene to his depressed spirits. His health had very slowly amended, but there were so much lassitude and inaction about him, that he felt a clog to himself, and, he feared, to others.

His father and his sisters were most anxious to do any thing which could amuse or engage his mind ; yet, though they succeeded for a day or two, he constantly relapsed, and sometimes passed many hours in the same position, without speaking.

Mr. Fanshaw roused him early the next day, and they set off for Darlington. When they arrived there, he was greeted with smiles of cordial pleasure by his domestics, who one and all assembled to meet him. He was rather surprised at it, and passed on to the usual sitting room; but not finding the object of his affectionate search there, he asked for their mistress, and at that moment her mother made her appearance; and after assuring him that his wife was well, and warmly welcoming Henry Fortescue, she desired Mr. Fanshaw to follow her; for though her daughter was well, yet, in her situation, she would feel it awkward to go up and down stairs.

Mr. Fanshaw willingly admitted the excuse, and hastily preceded Mrs. Delaval up stairs: he went to the boudoir, — she was not there; — a thought struck him, — he eagerly opened the bedroom door, and there he was welcomed by his wife with sincere affection, and

by his boy with a loud and hearty cry. Never was man more happy than Mr. Fanshaw at this moment — never did man more deserve to be so.

His wife was not displeased to save him the anxiety of her illness ; and therefore, though she wrote to him long after the first symptoms of her approaching confinement, she never mentioned it, and was amply recompensed ~~for her~~ forbearance in the delighted thankfulness he expressed.

After having stayed with her as long as the wise ones judged prudent, he shut himself up in his own favourite room : we did not enquire what he did there ; but,

“ By the pattern of our own thoughts we cut out the purity of his.”

He then wrote to his friends, and particularly to Mrs. Trevillyan, to remind her of her promise of standing to his first-born.

When that lady showed the letter to her husband, whether he was offended at not being solicited to stand sponsor likewise, or whether he envied Fanshaw's happiness, we know not; but it is certain his answer was not the softest in the world.

"This," said he, "might have been my own case, if you had chosen to take care of yourself, or if you had had any interest in my wishes; but really, even now I should not wonder if disappointment was again to be my fate."

"Can you for an instant suppose, sir," said his wife, "that it was my wish to provoke that illness?"

"What else can I suppose," returned he, "when I see you every day doing the most improper things? Were you not this morning in the green-house for an hour, placing the plants; and would any one but yourself be so foolish?"

"Probably not," said she, with a

sigh, “ but I only moved one very small plant, which a child might have carried.”

Mr. Trevillyan was determined, however, that she should be in the wrong, and she forbore contention. He had plagued her so constantly, by insisting she should eat, when she had no appetite; and abstain from food, when she most desired and wanted it; that she should sit still when she wished to use exercise, and drive or walk out when she wished to sit still; that her life was a continual misery, and her health was influenced by the depression of her spirits. Yet, far from supposing his excessive attention could be displeasing, he thought the impatience it was impossible for his wife to suppress, was all peevishness and ill-humour.

However, he accepted the invitation to Darlington; and Mrs. Trevillyan was presented with the family-jewels, and desired to procure the handsomest dresses to appear in. These were things she little cared for; however, they were had,

and he took care to have every thing under his eye well appointed. His servants had all new liveries, and his equipage looked very gay.

The time arrived, and they were received by the Fanshaws with great cordiality ; but Mrs. Fanshaw was distressed to observe the alteration in her friend. They had been from early childhood, ~~until~~ the death of Mr. Delaval, in habits of the greatest intimacy, went to the same school,

Rose at the instant, learned, played, eat together ;
And wheresoe'er they went, like Juno's swans,
Still they were coupled and together.

She had heard the whole progress of Henry Fortescue's attachment : indeed, she had seen it, " e'en from his boyish days ;" and Henry had himself told her of his visit to Eldrington, and the effect it had upon Clara. He only left them the day previous to that appointed for her arrival, and Mr. Fanshaw was quite pleased to think that he seemed much

more cheerful than he did upon his first appearance. He frequently had sat for hours in the invalid's room, talking over his favourite subject, Clara, and one morning gave her the following account of his shipwreck.

When he was torn away from every prospect of happiness, which Providence had so amply provided for him, he saw his native land diminish from his view with an aching heart; but with the buoyancy of youthful hope, he cheered himself with the promise of a speedy return to his betrothed wife and affectionate friends, never again to be separated from them; and the fine climate and luxuriant shores of the Mediterranean amused his pencil and his fancy, until the ship safely arrived at Malta.

He took with him introductions to the principal families, amongst the rest to a Mr. Henderson, who with his wife had long been stationary there; and their two daughters (who had been sent home for

education and for health) had arrived fifteen months before him.

Miss Henderson was a very elegant, pleasing girl ; and upon the first introduction, Henry Fortescue could not help fancying, that he could trace a strong resemblance between her and his own Clara Mordant, although she was three or four years her senior : yet upon examining the features more closely, he found Miss Henderson's eyes were dark, full of intelligence and animation, her ardent soul seemed to shine in her fine countenance, where every thought might be read, and where every emotion was pourtrayed : those of his affianced were more soft, more retiring, and in his opinion even more handsome : still there was a likeness, and that was enough to interest him.

For some time, however, he had so much business to transact, and his ardour to get through it was so great, that he had little time to attend to the ladies ; but

when that was *en train*, he allowed himself the recreation of society. Three or four times he had been at Mr. Henderson's, and as often he went away, charmed, to find that the sentiments of the two ladies were even more similar than their persons; still he had the gratification of seeing that Clara rose upon every comparison.

One day when Henry had dined there, and was looking over some music to find a particular song, which he had often sung with Miss Mordant, what was his surprise to find it in manuscript, the words of which were written in Clara's own hand! It is true it was in the unformed hand of a school-girl, but the traces were too well known, and too infinitely dear to him, to mistake them. "Pray tell me," said he, very impatiently, "how came you by Clara Mordant's writing. This song," added he, with visible emotion, "is of her copying."

" You have a good recollection of

writing, truly," said Miss Henderson, "considering that this has been written these six years. Miss Mordant and I were school-fellows until her father died, and then she was taken home and had private masters. I never saw her afterwards; but both she and Miss Delaval were very sweet girls. I heard of the marriage of the eldest Miss Delaval long before I left England; and somebody was telling me a very disastrous tale of her husband's running away, and leaving her and two children,—pray tell me of it. And now that we can talk of subjects equally,—no, not quite equally, I believe," said she, archly, "interesting to both, pray tell me of these things. Put down the music, and we will go and sit in the shade."

Henry followed, nothing loath; it was his "dearest theme." She needed no very great exertion or penetration to make herself mistress of what he had no wish to conceal; he was then engaged,

— she was to think of him as a harried man, — she determined it should be no more ; and from this time there appeared to subsist a bond of friendship between them, which was equally agreeable to both.

When the intense heats allowed of exercise, he was the constant companion of the young ladies, and the subject of their conversation was generally that nearest to his heart. He made Miss Henderson repeat all the trifling anecdotes of their school days; and this, which would be the most uninteresting of all dull things to a rational creature, was a delicious treat to a lover ; — for, for a lover to be rational upon the subject of his mistress, is not in the scale of possibility.

Mrs. Henderson's eyes were dreadfully affected by the ophthalmia, a disease very prevalent there ; but it attacked her with such inveteracy, as to threaten, unless immediately sent home, the total loss of sight. It was impossible her husband

could leave his advantageous situation, as he had no other means of supporting and providing for his family. At first, the idea of separating herself from him had deterred her from thinking of returning to England; but her extreme suffering, and the dreadful idea of blindness, determined her, and it was settled that she and her two daughters should return home under the auspices of Henry Fortescue.

He had arranged all his business, and sent home such documents as secured the future fulfilment of the engagements he had contracted; but he himself was obliged to wait for the signature of a gentleman from Sicily, who promised to be with him in time for the sailing of the last ship of the fleet. He kept him in suspense to the latest moment, and then arrived. The captain was anxious to sail instantly, in order to get up to the convoy.

Henry's baggage was all on board; he had never seen the vessel nearer

than from shore; but he heard it was a crazy old ship. For himself he would have ventured in an egg-shell, if he could have crammed himself into it, and have expected master Cupid would have wafted so faithful a votary safe to his affianced bride; but for Mrs. Henderson he thought otherwise, and he represented to her the possible dangers of the voyage. She was not, however, deterred; the certain blindness that awaited her, if she remained where she was, made her resolve to risk an uncertain evil: yet she tried every effort to dissuade her daughters from accompanying her, but in vain. She was so helpless from her infirmity, that she could do nothing for herself, and it was impossible to allow her to go with only a female attendant, who would never pay her those watchful and affectionate attentions she was used to receive from their hands.

Mr. Henderson knew not what to advise; he dearly loved his wife and

children, and the poor sufferer was so anxious to go, that he feared to object, lest fretting might confirm her malady. There was now no time for deliberation, the vessel was to sail in two hours; and they decided for the voyage. Every possible plan had been devised for their comfort and accommodation.

Hitherto the bustle of preparation had kept up their spirits; but when the moment of separation came, and they were to leave the excellent husband and father, they felt severely. The parting had something of awe and solemnity in it, which was felt by all; and as he pressed each of them to his bosom, their tears flowed profusely, while he affectionately bestowed upon them his blessing.

CHAP. IX.

A brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces.

Tempest ■

Shipwreck.

THEY embarked, and immediately set sail; their spirits revived, and they had a pleasant voyage to Gibraltar. They had so much amusement with them, that the young ladies considered the voyage short.

Here, however, they were obliged to wait for convoy, which delayed them considerably; and from this delay all their succeeding distress arose. A dreadful storm separated them at the entrance of the Channel; a sudden north-east wind split their sails, as if they had been made of paper: and between this wind on one side,

and the south-west surges on the other, the vessel was so violently tossed, that the mariners would not stir from the sides for fear of being washed over. Nothing could be more appalling than the continued noise of the elements, the bursting of the tackle, and the cracking of the ship. She soon lost her top-gallant-mast, and shortly after, her main-mast went by the board with a tremendous crash, the dead-lights were fixed in, and all was horror. She sprung a leak, and all hands were ordered to the pumps; but in vain, the water rose in spite of all their efforts,—the night closed, it was one of great terror,—the wind was fearfully high,—the sea tempestuous,—surge after surge breaking over the vessel, each threatening instant destruction. It became generally dark, save now and then when a faint gleam of moonlight from behind a black and quickly passing cloud, only served to make the scene more visibly terrific.

Mrs. Henderson severely blamed herself for what she called her own selfishness, in risking the lives of her children for an uncertain personal benefit. In vain did these affectionate children try to soothe her with hopes, which they themselves believed fallacious. Minute-guns were fired, but the wind was very right in their teeth, and there was little chance of their being heard, and less of the probability of assistance.

Morning rose, but without any abatement of the storm. Henry Fortescue, who had cheerfully taken his turn with the men at the pumps, now joined the ladies. He found the daughters upon their knees, bathing their mother's hands with their tears, while she fervently called down blessings upon them : they clung together for support, for it was with great difficulty they saved their almost blind parent from being dashed from side to side of their little cabin. The young ladies

turned their imploring eyes to him, as if it was in his power to save them ; — but the worst apprehensions pervaded every bosom, and nothing but despair was to be seen in his countenance. — The water rose so fast as to baffle all attempts to keep it under, — spirits were dealt out without reserve, in order to cheer the men ; — yet it was evident the ship could not outlive the approaching night. Yet Henry endeavoured to comfort the little group, who, far from acting as many of their weaker sex would have done in similar situations, prepared themselves to meet that fate which seemed inevitable, with fortitude and resignation.

“ It is in vain, my dear children,” said Mrs. Henderson, “ that we attempt to deceive ourselves,—our last hour is at hand : and may the great God of Heaven receive and bless us ! For myself, I have been blessed in this world by a tolerably long life,—a kind husband, and affectionate children : all that now re-

mains to me, even should I live, is probable blindness and suffering. But for you, my dear children, who have every blessing to look forward to—~~to~~ to be sacrificed at so early an age!—I can never forgive myself for it: and when I think of your poor father, and his sufferings, my heart bleeds for him.”

She stretched out her arms to embrace her daughters, as she said, “I charge you, if it is in the mercy of Providence to spare either of you, to implore him not to blame my memory for the loss of the other.”

For a moment Henry Fortescue forgot the horror of the storm in the affecting scene he contemplated;—but at that instant a tremendous crash overpowered them, and a great body of water deluged their cabin. Henry caught hold of Miss Henderson, but she shook him off, begging him to go to her mother, while she assisted her sister Amelia. Mrs. Henderson refused to stir;—it was no

time for ceremony, — Henry took her in his arms, and, with extreme difficulty, bore her upon deck ; and having placed her in comparative safety, he learnt that a flask of lightning, which they had seen below, had struck the ship, and that one of the boys who lay skulking in the forecastle, had been absolutely thrown upon the chains at the other end of the vessel ; but so imminent was the danger of the time, that not a soul dared to venture after him. Henry darted forward, and was twice thrown back ; but the third attempt he succeeded in getting hold of the poor lad, who was just recovering his senses : he got him upon deck, — but he had no sooner seen him there, than a most appalling spectacle seemed, for an instant, to benumb his senses, as well as those of all who saw it, — a frightful surge, which it was impossible to escape, and which was twice the height of the ship, came rolling majestically but steadily forward, the inevitable messen-

ger of death! — all eyed it in fearful dread, lest they themselves were registered in its mission.

At that moment, Miss Amelia Henderson had just reached the deck. — Regardless of danger himself, Henry flew to her assistance, — he tried to catch hold of her; — at the instant he did so, — they were both washed off by the huge body of water, which carried away every thing from that part of the vessel. He contrived to keep himself up by the assistance of a poultry coop, which floated, and then got hold of a rope from some of the broken rigging, and by the help of that, and taking advantage of the next swell, he got once more upon deck.

His first thought was for Amelia. Alas! there were no ropes for her, — a piercing shriek, which penetrated even through the noise of the elements, now struck his ear; — but it was not until the next surge lifted them to alarming

eminence, that he saw her light form struggling and buffeting the waves.— Alas! the contest was momentary,— she sunk to rise no more.

If blindness could ever be a blessing, it was such at this moment,—the mother was spared the distracting sight. Few, indeed, witnessed it,—for each was so engrossed by seeking means of self-preservation, that few thought of any other;—but there were many who shared her fate.

What became of Miss Henderson? Henry, as soon as he could recover this horror, went to seek her;—she had nearly got upon deck after her sister, when the same surge which so cruelly performed its mission there, struck her down, and she lay some time senseless. ~~As~~ soon as he assisted her, he tried to dissuade her from going again upon deck;—but her mother and sister were there, she said, “and thank God,” added she, with fervour, “that they were; they

could not have borne the violence of the blow I had."

Henry shuddered as she spoke; yet he had not the courage to prepare her for what she must soon discover. But her fortitude was called even to greater trials than this; — when he had, with great difficulty, taken her to her mother, who sat the image of resignation, clinging to a small iron rail which had yet withstood all attacks, she exclaimed, " My dearest mother, what can I do for you? You will die with cold :" and, indeed, her clothes were drenched with water, and the cutting winds seemed to sport with her aged form.

" My child," answered Mrs. Henderson, " I do well, and shall soon do better; — but I only hear one voice, — where is Amelia! I thought I heard a shriek, and my fancy gave it to her; — let me feel both my children, — let us all go together."

Louisa Henderson turned a look of

penetrating enquiry upon Henry Fortescue: in his countenance she saw so much anguish, that she was convinced some great calamity had befallen her.

"She cannot keep her feet upon deck," said Henry.

Louisa caught the hint; — and while her heart was torn with apprehension and dismay, she endeavoured to command her voice, while she said, "Our storm will soon be over, and then we shall once more be united."

She had not long to dissemble, — the vessel struck upon a rock, and instantly separated. The scream of horror, from men, women, and children, as they were precipitated into the merciless flood; — the bursting asunder of the vessel, and the moans of the animals they had on board, surpassed all description. And had not the sad fiat been irrevocably fixed, so piercing, so soul-harrowing a sound, might have softened even the stern

decrees of fate ; — as it was, however, the dreadful yell was soon lost by the overpowering noise of the elements.

Henry Fortescue was thrown at some distance from his friends ; he was fortunately a good swimmer. A little way from him there was a poor woman, one of the sailors' wives, who was snatching a few moments from eternity by clinging to the end of a mast with one arm, while with the other she supported her infant child ; — he called to her to keep fast her hold, and that he would go to her. “ Oh,” said she, “ never heed me, but save my little one, — only save my poor child ; — my William is gone, and I will go to him.” Saying this, she, with a sudden effort, attempted to throw the child to him, but her motion drove the mast in the contrary direction, and the poor little infant was swallowed in the yawning abyss, and rose no more ! The agonized mother gave a scream, quitted her hold, and sunk for ever.

Henry, half dead with fatigue, want of food, and the terrors of the scene, was beginning to ask himself whether, amidst so many horrors, life was worth further exertion ; — but the image of Clara Mordant, at that moment, presented herself to his imagination, and gave him fresh energy. He now looked around for Mrs. Henderson and her daughter, and saw them clinging to the timbers, which yet had adhered to the keel, and which was by far the largest portion of the wreck. He thought it possible, if he could get them aboard this, they might be secured at least for some hours. He swam towards them, and, after many failures, at last succeeded in placing them there ; he staid with them for some moments, to recruit his nearly exhausted strength, and then cast a glance over the miserable scene.

The storm, as if sated with its victims, was subdued for the day ; — but its close was fast approaching. There was a small

island, or rather rock, perceptible at a great distance, but Henry knew he could not swim half the length at present; he therefore set himself to consider if there were any objects within his reach whom he could get to this place of comparative safety.

The very boy whom he had already saved by his generous exertions, when struck by lightning, was the only being who met his eye; he was struggling, and apparently at his last gasp.—Henry again gave himself to the waves, and happily brought the poor fellow to the wreck: every other soul perished. They had none of them tasted food for two whole days; and hunger was added to their other sufferings: fortunately, the lad was better instructed in the internal economy of the ship than the rest.

After some difficulty and assistance, he groped out a small barrel of biscuit; which, though of the coarsest kind, and well soddened in sea-water, was a very welcome repast: he also, pursuing hi-

search, procured a nearly empty cask of rum, which had been broached for the men at the pump.

This, in some measure, cheered them ; and even in this perilous situation, when the slightest squall would have annihilated them, they yielded themselves to the care of the winds, and slept ; and though it was not the soundest they ever knew, yet it refreshed them.

When Henry awoke, which was at the first dawn of the morning, he looked for the rock ; and was surprised to find they had drifted very near to it. He knew he could easily reach it ; but how to convey Mrs. Hendersoh there, and her daughter, was beyond his imagination.

What was to be done ? If the wreck, which was driving fast towards it, should touch the rock, the crazy planks, which divided them from eternity, would surely give way.

The lad now came, and asserted that he could swim well, and could take

charge of one of the ladies. Henry proposed taking Mrs. Henderson himself, as the most helpless. She begged to be left to perish ; but as her daughter would not leave her, she consented. They anxiously watched the moment, when they had drifted as near to the rock as was thought consistent with safety ; and then each, with their burthen, again braved the deep. Fortune relented for this time ; and they reached the shore in safety.

As soon as this was effected, the lad swam again to the wreck, got on board, and fastening a rope, towed her round to a little creek, where they secured her : they then searched her well ; there was a cot, and some bedding, which they hauled ashore, and spread upon the rock to dry. A box of figs spoilt by sea-water, was all the eatables they could find : however, they were glad even of that ; and they got a plank, and stuck it in the ground, and tied one

'of the sheets to the top of it, by way of signal for any ship that hove in sight.

Having emptied the miserable wreck of all they could use, they went in search of water. There were no springs to be found — indeed the rock was only covered by thick sand and weeds ; but the late rains had left little pools in the fissures of the rock, and to these, the Unfortunates applied themselves with great avidity.

Mrs. Henderson, indeed, appeared to be sinking under the accumulation of misfortune and deprivations she had suffered ; and it was evident she would not long survive. She never had asked for her daughter Amelia ; for she felt that she could not bear to hear what might have befallen her. She sat for hours, without speech or motion ; and this was still more dreadful to Louisa, than hearing her complain.

In the evening, she again tried to rouse her ; she folded her in her arms,

and exclaimed, “ My dearest mother, why will you not speak to me? O cheer me by the sound of your voice; let me but hear you bless me; and I shall feel that the Almighty has not quite deserted me.”

She paused for an answer; there was no pressure,—apparently no sensibility; she looked in her face;—alas! her mother was speechless;—a paralytic stroke had been the consequence of the miseries she had endured.

Louisa sunk upon her knees; “ O Father of mercies,” said she, while her sobs nearly choaked her utterance, “ leave me not comfortless; take me, in pity take me, from such accumulated wretchedness.”

Henry Fortescue heard her prayer: “ Do you remember your poor father?” said he; “ and is it only for ourselves that we live? Surely not: and yet,” added he, in a softened tone, “ did I not know that the happiness of one being,

who is far dearer to me than all the world beside, depended upon me, I am not sure that I should have had strength and courage to brave the horrors I have gone through : but let us take heart, my dear friend ; Providence may now be weary of afflicting us, and happiness may yet be in store for us.”

“ Never for me, Henry ;” said Louisa, and her tears flowed afresh.

He endeavoured to comfort her ; and assisted her in rubbing the feet of her mother : they were of an icy coldness. They employed themselves all night in endeavouring to keep life in Mrs. Henderson : but all their efforts were vain ; she died about five o’clock in the morning ; and without the power of affording that blessing her dutiful child had requested.

Her distracted daughter hung over her in deep distress, which Henry forbore to disturb ; wisely considering, that in the first emotions of sorrow, the mind

naturally seeks consolation from the only source which can shield it from despair. He therefore left her, and as soon as the sun was up, reconnoitred the little island, and thought he discerned a small speck upon the ocean;— he looked till he was so dazzled, that he was obliged to call the boy, who instantly pronounced it a vessel. They immediately set about hoisting more signals, and kindled a fire long before it could possibly be seen; the wood was so wet too, it would not burn: but they took sheets and blankets, and paraded them on different parts of the rock.— Their efforts succeeded,— the faint light was at last discovered; and the linen, whitened by the sun-beams, attracted the mariners:— they neared the rock; but the surf was high, and the coast rugged:— the little boat was launched and manned; but the wind was high, and quite against them,— and the boat returned to the ship, being too small to contend with such powerful antago-

nists. But for Miss Henderson, Henry would have swam out: she entreated him to do so, as she saw the boat putting back: but soon they observed the crew intended to make another trial;— the large boat was hoisted, and with many hands successfully gained as near the rock as they could:— two sailors then waded to the shore.

Henry prepared Miss Henderson for removing; but she positively refused to stir, without the corpse of her mother was allowed to go too. He well knew the horror a sailor has to having a corpse on board; and he was arguing the point with her when these men came up;— they heard the discussion.— Henry was contemplating whether he should employ force to carry her off, when one of them good-humouredly gave him a wink. He then got the blankets, spread them, and carefully wrapped the body in them, as if intending to carry it on board. Satisfied with this, she consigned herself once more to Henry's direction:— one

sailor carried her to the boat ; the other, assisted by the lad, unwrapped the body the moment she was away, and instantly folded up the bedding, to look as like it as possible : they then took the corpse, and wrapping it in some tattered remnants of sail, decently consigned it to the deepest water they could find. This done, they took up the bedding and carried it to the boat, where it was carefully laid : they were so speedy in their operations, that they were not a minute behind the young lady, and they put off.

They safely got on board the ship, where they were treated with every kindness their unhappy and forlorn situation required. A lady gave up her cabin, and assisted to take off those clothes which had been so often drenched ; and which, even now, were not dry : and poor Louisa, exhausted and harassed, was once more placed in a comfortable bed, where she soon fell asleep. She had, as

she believed, seen her mother's corpse placed on the floor beside her; and her first impulse when she awoke was to look at it. She opened the sheet with dutiful awe and tenderness, and was grieved to find the imposition: however, as no remonstrance could give her back the loved remains of her parent, from which she must, in any event, have been separated that day, as the weather was becoming warm, she felt that the only consolation she could have would be that of commanding her pure spirit to the Almighty; — and it was not now too late to do so. After a few minutes passed in devotion, she returned again to her pillow, and slept another hour.

While the agitation still lasted of all these painful scenes, she experienced a kind of fever; but when recollection brought all her miseries, all her losses, before her in sober calmness, her spirits sunk under them.

The ship was outward bound, and destined for Leghorn: they had a plea-

sant and quick voyage ; — but every day, Henry Fortescue felt, was carrying him farther from the object of his affection. Clara was, no doubt, now at Portsmouth, waiting in anxious suspense for his arrival, or possibly overwhelmed with grief at his supposed loss. This, and the extraordinary fatigue he had undergone, preyed upon his health, and he daily declined.

They found many friends at Leghorn, but no ships likely to sail for England ; for the enemy's cruizers were so much upon the alert, that they only sailed in fleets, and under convoy. He, therefore, accompanied Miss Henderson overland to Sicily ; and as neither of them were in a state to travel far, they took short stages.

Miss Henderson had procured the company of a female acquaintance, and under other circumstances the journey would have been delightful : — they crossed the straits of Messina, and

hoped to "arrive at Mr. Henderson's house before he could have had any news of his loss ; — but the very day before, a vessel had brought the melancholy intelligence of the shipwreck, and the total loss of the whole crew.

The distracted father had shut himself up in his own apartment, and nobody had dared to intrude upon his sorrows. — Louisa burst into his apartment, and fell down at his feet : — a most heart-rending scene ensued. But, after the first ebullitions of keen regret were over, he gratefully thanked Heaven for sparing him one blessing, when he thought himself bereft of all.

Henry Fortescue, with whom the heat of the climate had before agreed well, was now assailed with a malignant fever, which deprived him of his senses, and he lay for a length of time in the most imminent danger. Mr. Henderson and his daughter watched him with the utmost anxiety.

His recovery was so slow, and his

impatience so great to return to England, that he embarked when it was thought hardly possible he could outlive the voyage. He took a most affectionate leave of his kind friends, and promised to correspond with them.

They had a quick voyage;—but when he neared the spot where so many dreadful scenes had happened, it required all his strength of mind to support his composure. — However, he landed at Portsmouth with better spirits than health; — indeed, he was in a perfect fever of agitation and impatience, when the dreadful newspaper presented itself to him. — We have seen the effect it had upon him.

He went to town the day after he had seen Mrs. Mordant, who had dispatched two lines, written in hardly legible characters, to her son, to apprise him of his approach.

Charles Mordant received him most affectionately, and did not hide his regret

upon his sister's marriage. The next day he broke his safety, by degrees, to old Mr. Fortescue ; and it is difficult to say which was most painful, — his sorrow for his supposed loss, or his joy at again embracing this darling son.

CHAP. X.

But wail his fall, whom we struck down.

Macbeth.

Well, such losers may have leave to speak.

Henry VI.

The Veteran laid low.—A Sale.

HENRY Fortescue had informed Mrs. Fanshaw of the momentary meeting, and the effect it had on Mrs. Trevillyan; and mentioned his intention of setting off immediately for Malta, which she strongly advised his doing. She could not help thinking that Miss Henderson was attached to him, and she was thankful for any thing which would engage his thoughts from their present bias.

He took leave of her with the firm intention of sailing with the first Mediterranean fleet.

Mrs. Trevillyan did not mention him to her friend, and, therefore, Mrs. Fanshaw did not introduce the subject ; — his name seemed, by tacit consent, excluded for a time from their conversation.

Mr. Fanshaw, who had heard of Mr. Reynolds's conduct to the poor Gordons, whom he had taken to his own parish, and of whose goodness the Colonel delighted to speak, wished to cultivate the acquaintance of so good a man. He, therefore, proposed to his wife to invite them to the christening with the Colonel.

A proposition from him was very seldom opposed by her, and she wrote to Mrs. Reynolds, to request the pleasure of seeing her with her husband.

The second day after the arrival of the Trevillyans, as they were taking an airing in the beautiful grounds, they were amused to see an object at some distance, which they could not mistake, let his situation be ever so changed. — He was now riding on horseback, —

his best laced cocked hat and diamond shoe-buckles glittering brilliantly in the rays of the mid-day sun: but he was not alone, — on a pillion behind him sat the nurse, and the child on her lap.— It was Colonel Desburgh.— He by no means quickened his pace when he saw them approaching, but suffered his old charger to choose his own time. The animal had never before carried so large a stock of live lumber on his back; and his pride did not appear to rise with the weight of his honours.

The Colonel had left the Rectory in his whisky, in which he had packed the nurse and child; and in the hollow of the head, he had dexterously contrived to stow plenty of ready-made meat for young master; and a little prog for himself and the woman to eat on the road, which saved charges at the inns.

Short-sighted mortals that we are! how industriously we heap up treasures, not knowing who may benefit by them.

The second day of the journey, the whole of which did not exceed forty-six miles, as they were proceeding at their usual ambling motion, there appeared a dashing landau and four-in-hand, driven by a gay young man of high *ton*, and a buck of a companion seated by him on the dicky — two grooms behind.

Upon spying the old-fashioned machine of our veteran, and his extraordinary figure, the driver put the end of his whip to his mouth, and blew the horn so well, that one might suppose he had had a very able instructor.

Our dear old charger had been used to the well-known sound ; and though many years had passed since last he heard it, he had not lost his affection for it : he pricked up his ears, snorted, and began a sort of ambling motion, which, in his younger days, might have been denominated a prance.

This tickled the fancies of our frolicsome charioteers ;— and, for a joke, they

contrived to drive so near to the vehicle, that their wheel touched it; not however with such force as to hurt any thing that was not as decayed as our whisky; that, alas! had been eked out with cord, bits of leather, and plates of iron, till every rut in the road threatened its destruction. But the Colonel was always prepared with cord, leather, nails, and a hammer; and dreaded no accident which these could not repair:— the shock of the concussion tore asunder some of these fragile supporters, and gently laid our veteran across the road.

The charger forgot the gratification he had enjoyed by the horn, in the check he undesignedly received from his master in falling; so he stood still:— and the nurse finding how things were likely to go, managed to save herself and her charge from falling, by instantly stepping out of the crazed machine.

The young men were really sorry for the effect of their frolic, of which they.

had not the slightest intention. They immediately stopped their carriage, and alighted; leaving their servants to take care of it, while they went to the assistance of the Colonel, and expressed their concern for the accident.

The veteran had risen,— he had fallen too gently to be hurt. His first enquiry was for his child; and when he saw him laughing; he was satisfied of his safety, and very readily accepted the excuses of the young men. But when these youths saw the heterogeneous mass of odd articles which bestrewed the road, and which had escaped from the head of the whisky, it was impossible to keep their countenances.

In the first place, there was a quantity of pap, or at least spoon meat, for the heir apparent, which broke loose from the jar, by the unceremonious contact with the ground; — a little cordial bottle of am'seed, to prevent the cold from hurting his stomach; — a bundle in a silk

pocket-handkerchief, through which peeped the best regimental costume of the veteran; and which he, perhaps, thought would be more advantageously placed there, than packed up in the small box appertaining to the whisky:—a piece of ham, which bore evident marks of a recent attack; a worsted night-cap; a sucking-bottle; a gally-pot of ready-made mustard; a band-box, of which the string had given way, and exposed to view a fine new cap of the nurse's:—and last, but by no means of the least consequence, in her estimation, a front of false hair, with the finest shining ringlets imaginable. These, with divers and sundry other necessaries, both for young and old, passed in review before our elegant sprigs of fashion.

The Colonel carefully picked up all he thought worthy, took especial care of the ham-bone and a dry crust, and remarked with satisfaction, that a small bottle of brandy was not broken:—but he cast a

rueful look at the whisky, and thought of the expense of repairing it.

They were six miles from their last stage, and he sorrowfully proved that the fracture surpassed his power of mending. It was quite impossible he could carry the luggage, or that he could lead the horse to the next place they were to bait at. Our young men, however, soon good-naturedly assisted him in his difficulties. They offered to take him and his suite in the inside of their carriage, and as many things as were not spoilt by the fall; and they advised him to hire a countryman, to walk the horse and machine back to the last inn.'

The Colonel demurred at the latter proposal: in the first place, the expense of hiring the man;—and then they must go over the same road again in another carriage, unless this could be mended immediately. This was vexatious; but there was no alternative:—he took the poor man aside, and made his own terms with him.

This settled, he assisted the nurse into the fine carriage with the child, together with nearly all the varieties before-mentioned,—such as never were before in so fine a vehicle. He then got in himself, after having carefully surveyed the road, to ascertain that nothing was lost; and the whisky, to be sure that nothing could be stolen from it.

They drove off, and the innkeeper was somewhat surprised to find our hero returned in a carriage so very different from his own; and in company with these young men, whom he well knew, as they lived in the neighbourhood; and he took care, by his bows and cringes, to make up for the respect and attention he had omitted before.

The young men invited the veteran to partake a tiffen with them. Like all others, they at first thought him a delightful butt to vent their wit upon: but they soon changed their manners; and when they learnt that he was on his road

to Darlington, where they were both well acquainted, they studied who should pay him most attention.

Some time afterwards the whisky arrived, and the gentlemen proposed sending for a coachmaker; but the Colonel said a wheelwright would do much better: he was accordingly summoned, and pronounced, that no repairs could ever make the machine safe for one mile; and his only surprise was, how it had lasted that length.

Much dissatisfied with this decision, he declared the man knew nothing about it, and sent for another; but his opinion only confirmed the former one. The Colonel said, if he had only his own carpenter, who used to attend the baggage-waggons, he should not have been in this dilemma: as it was, however, he desired to know which would give him the most money for it.

One immediately offered a pound; — the veteran turned to the other, who said, “ I’ll give a guinea.”

The Colonel now, with as much eagerness as if it was his only dependence, again turned towards the first, expecting an advance in the terms. At last the fellow said, while he scratched his head, "Come, I'll give 'tother sixpence." The Colonel veered about to the other, who said, "Well, take it then,—it may be worth five-and-twenty shillings, but not a farthing more."

"Five-and-twenty shillings!" exclaimed the Colonel, "come, you shall have it for one pound four shillings at once, without more ado."

"No, no, let Sam have it," said he, "I'll not be his hindrance."

Accordingly the bargain was struck, and the money, that is, a one-pound note and a shilling, was tendered; but the veteran insisted that there was sixpence more due to him. The man said, in all transactions in his line, there was something thrown back for luck, and that he hoped his honour would allow the luck-penny.

This business adjusted, the Colonel asked if they knew any one who had a second-hand saddle and pillion to dispose of?

"I have one," said his whisky friend, "almost as good as new, which I'll sell you cheap."

He soon fetched a miserable concern, much worn and moth-eaten, and asked fifteen shillings for it.

The veteran remonstrated, — and at last beat him down to half-a-guinea ; he then very carefully counted out ten shillings, reminding the man, that in all his dealings, the luck-penny was allowed.

Our dashing heroes stood by all this time, infinitely amused by the scene, and every now and then lending a word to heighten the fun.

The old charger was now caparisoned in his new gear : at first, he did not seem to understand the pillion, and the weight on his hind-quarters ; but as he was coaxed by the cheering well-known

voice of his master, he submitted with great docility, and they reached the next stage, thirteen miles, in rather less than four hours, — the Colonel walking up every ascent, and making the nurse do the same.

At this place they rested for that day, and the next coach brought them their baggage,—not, indeed, entire, for, we lament to say, the false curls,—(we were almost committing ourselves in a pun, but just recollect it would be inconsistent with the dignity of our history,) — the false cuffs then, were missing, — cruelly left in the muddy road.

We strongly suspect they did not escape the keen vigilant eye of our veteran, and, most likely, he thought them much better there, than gracing or greasing the forehead of the nurse. The damsel, however, was by no means of his way of thinking; she blamed herself severely, — but, truth to say, she was so taken up by making the agreeable and simper-

ing to the fine dashing servants belonging to the landau, and her head so turned by riding in so grand a vehicle, no wonder she forgot its ornament.

The next morning, by rising very early, they arrived at Darlington by mid-day, and the Colonel informed his friends there, that Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, and Miss Eliza Dennison, who had unexpectedly returned, would be with them the next day : — he added, that Mrs. Reynolds had, at first, proposed staying at home with her, but that her husband would not visit without her. He had himself, he said, objected to this, for she was so good a woman, he thought they should not lose the opportunity of becoming acquainted. Indeed, she was an excellent wife, and Mr. Reynolds felt quite satisfied with his choice.

Mrs. Fanshaw, whose manners to her guests were extremely elegant, was particularly attentive to her new acquaintance ; but she soon discerned the dif-

ference, and much preferred the married to the single sister.

The Colonel appeared cautiously to avoid all conversation which could lead to the subject of his wife; and Mrs. Reynolds, in a walk which she had with Mrs. Fanshaw, told her, that he had, upon his first arrival at the Rectory, passed much of his time alone in his chamber; and although she sometimes fancied she saw traces of tears on his furrowed cheek when he returned, yet, before her, he took great care to appear cheerful, and that he was the most accommodating man she ever saw.—“Would to Heaven,” added she, “my misguided sister had proved herself worthy such a man!”

In the course of their conversation, Mrs. Fanshaw learnt, that one day when Mr. Reynolds was absent upon parochial duties, she took courage, and ventured to speak of her sister. Far from vent-

ing execrations or reproaches," as she expected, the excellent old man said, " I feel that I have not been without blame, — I ought to have thought more humbly of myself, than to suppose a young and beautiful woman could have voluntarily attached herself to me; — but having married her, I should have yielded something to "her wishes, and afforded her those gratifications my fortune allowed: but," added he, in a tone of self-reproach, " I was simple enough to suppose, that her professions to me while at Southampton were genuine. I looked for no guile in a soldier's daughter, — so young too! — and it was at the very moment when she appeared to me the most happy, the most affectionate, that she deceived me. — But I forgive her, poor child!" said he, with great emotion, " I forgive her; and I call upon the Almighty to witness, that could she be reclaimed from vice, and brought to repentance, I should think

the small residue of my days a cheap sacrifice.

“ I have sent messengers, both in this country and Ireland, but can learn no traces of her. ‘ She is not with Sir John Neerdowel. I shudder to think what may have happened to her ; — she may, at this moment, be reduced to the deepest abyss of profligacy ; for if she did go with Sir John, which I have great reason to doubt, the abandoned coward can have no heart, no feeling, for any one but himself.’ — Never did I see a man,” and in the energy of his own honourable feelings he lost the subject of Sophia, “ never did I see a man devoid of courage, possessed of any other virtue.”

He did not give the least hint that he suspected the child was not his own ; on the contrary, he was never happy but when the infant was with him. The fine boy crowded to him, held out his little arms whenever he saw them, and cried heartily when taken away. These

proofs of attachment were very grateful to the old man's heart, and he doated upon him with the fondest affection.

Miss Eliza Dennison immediately attached herself to Mr. Trevillyan, and as she was the only unmarried lady of the party, he was pleased with the preference. She entered into his character, indulged his sarcasm, and gratified his vanity, by preferring every thing at Eldrington to Darlington. Mrs. Trevillyan was rejoiced at any thing which could divert his attention from herself, and she daily improved in health and looks under the kind management of her friend.

The gala day at length arrived, and the child was made a Christian. Lord Charles Wentworth, and Sir Henry Lyttleton, and Mrs. Trevillyan, were the sponsors. The tenants in holiday suits, most of which were presented by their munificent lady, assembled in the park, where an abundant dinner was served up; after which the Colonel, arrayed in his

very best habiliments, requested the honour of beginning a dance with Mrs. Fanshaw. — “ I take precedence,” said he to Lord Charles, “ as being the senior of the party.” His claim was readily admitted; and it was very entertaining to see the gallantry and spirit with which he acquitted himself.

That dance gone down, our party left the merry-hearted crew to the care of the servants and John Harding, who delighted in such scenes, and retired to prepare themselves for their own banquet, when they were joined by a numerous assemblage, and amongst the rest by our two charioteers, who gladly renewed their acquaintance with our veteran, and amused many of the party with an account of their first introduction upon the road. The evening concluded with music and dancing.

Eliza made herself as amiable as possible to the young man she sat next at dinner, in hopes of securing him as a

partner for the evening : but it was then the fashion for young men of *ton* to pay attention to married, not single ladies. Whether it was that they feared the imputation of cruelty, in laying themselves out to advantage before these speculators, or whether they themselves feared for their own safety, we know not—but at that time such was the case. Eliza then had the merit of keeping constant to her married flirt, and she danced with Mr. Trevillyan the whole evening.

That gentleman began to feel that Miss Mordant had never paid him half the attention this girl had done. Before they were married, far from wishing to attract or to please him, Clara was always retiring, and the courtesies were certainly all upon his side. No doubt then she could have very little affection for him ; and even since their union, although she had never disputed his will in the slightest degree, yet that was the obedience of duty, not the acquiescence

of affection. He marked too the difference of manner of Mrs. Fanshaw to her husband ; — was there ever any thing so perfect as their conduct ? Her eye absolutely brightened, and her spirits rose at his approach. Mrs. Trevillyan was always calm — no pleasure danced in her eye, no happiness beamed in her smile ; and he began to think that he liked animation and sprightliness.

It never once occurred to him to carry the comparison to himself and Mr. Fanshaw. He was always right, let who would be wrong. He went no where without his wife ; he was uniformly polite and attentive to her ; yet all this was accompanied with such unbending superiority of manner — there was so little of the kindness of the heart about it, that it was very unlikely he should win affections which had been deeply engaged to a far different object.

The next day most of the party dispersed, and the Colonel proposed return-

ing home the same way as they came ; but Mr. Fanshaw took them the first stage of their journey, and Mr. and Mrs. Trevillyan walked out alone, while the host was thus busied in kind attentions to the Colonel and his party. They went ~~into~~ a school for poor children, which had just been established on their property for the benefit of the tenants. Mr. Trevillyan inspected the lessons of the boys, and as they were going out he said,— “ You might have done the same at Eldrington ; but you never seem to think of these things. A little attention this way would be much more to my pleasure than sitting at your piano-forte all day ; but you have no turn of this sort.”

“ Nor perhaps should I,” said Mrs. Fanshaw, very quickly, as she came out of one of the rooms, and had overheard his observation ; “ it was my husband who thought and who executed ; all the trouble I have had in it was to find expressions of praise equal to his deserts.—

But," added she, with great warmth, "he told you I suggested it. It is just like him; he always gives every amiable action to his wife, while he takes all her omissions upon himself—and he is right; for his excellence is so far above that of the generality of mankind, that he would be an object of envy and ill-nature, if he did not take some of my faults to balance it."

Whether Mr. Trevillyan felt the implication, we know not—for he was silent.

CHAP. XI.

Few men rightly tamper with the stars.

Henry VI.

We make our own Miseries.

THE day was now fixed for their departure. Mrs. Fanshaw had earnestly requested that Mrs. Trevillyan should stay at Darlington till after her confinement; but her husband said he thought it quite necessary that the heir of Eldrington Hall should be born upon the estate. She then offered herself to go with her. Mrs. Trevillyan, with many thanks, said, that she was now quite indifferent about herself: “if I die,” said she, “I have only my mother, my brother, and you, to regret me.”—Her heart whispered that there was another, if she were allowed to think of him.

Mrs. Fanshaw was exceedingly distressed ; she never had heard her say so much before ; but she tried to raise her spirits by the near prospect she had of adding another and a dearer tie to this world.

" Poor child ! " said Mrs. Trevillyan, " if it should be a girl, her lot will not be enviable. If it is, and she should lose her mother, promise me, my dear friend, to bring her up with your own. Her father will no doubt marry again, and then what will become of my innocent child ? "

Mrs. Fanshaw, with tearful eyes, looked earnestly in the face of her friend ; she saw there no emotion—no tear, but a death-like pallor, which gave her much more apprehension than either.—

" My dear Clara," said she, " why conjure up such apparitions ? Trust me, if you will take courage, all will go well, and I shall yet see you a happy mother ; and forgive me, if I say I think you

reprehensible in indulging sentiments like these. Think," added she, with great earnestness, " how many thousands would gladly exchange situations with you ;— think, too, that if you are not as happy as you once anticipated, yet you have the satisfaction of knowing that you owe nothing to your own indiscretion or precipitation. I am well aware of all that has occurred ; and deeply as I regret these events, they are inevitable, and it is your duty to support them with fortitude, and not to allow yourself to sink under them. We have seen how nobly you exerted yourself under circumstances of peculiar distress ; surely you will not suffer yourself to sink under minor evils. It is a painful duty you have to perform ; but is a duty,— and I expect my friend will not shrink from it. If this is not a boy, the next may."

During this admonition of her friend, Mrs. Trevillyan had been dissolved in tears, which appeared to afford her relief :

—she threw herself into her arms, and assured her she would not forfeit the opinion she had formed of her, and that she should see that she would exert herself under the trials which she could not help fearing were in store for her;—but she declined taking her friend to Eldrington, without an especial invitation from Mr. Trevillyan. Mrs. Fanshaw gave her a solemn assurance, that she would watch over her child, if necessary, with the same tenderness as her own.

Two days afterwards they separated, to the great agitation of Mrs. Fanshaw, and a sort of foreboding of ill on the part of Mrs. Trevillyan, who embraced her, at the moment of parting, with unusual warmth.

The gentlemen did not greatly partake of this sorrow; their ideas of each other were somewhat changed. Mr. Fanshaw found his friend less amiable, on intimate and domestic knowledge, than he had before imagined possible; — he

was more selfish, more dictatorial; and his manners to his wife and to Miss Dennison were not at all to his taste: but Mrs. Trevillyan rose every hour in his estimation; he knew all the circumstances of her situation, and considered her a most exemplary character.

Mr. Trevillyan envied his friend's popularity, derided his philanthropy, and thought with contempt of his gaiety and playful humour. He could not bear that any thing, or any body, should be superior to himself, and therefore it was that he set at nought that excellence, which he had no heart to attain himself.

When the carriage drew up to the door of Eldrington Hall, poor Felix was in anxious attendance, and the meeting was equally pleasing to himself and his mistress.

Mrs. Trevillyan now became much engaged in making preparations for the expected stranger. A week afterwards, she had the happiness of seeing her

mother, who felt pleased at the alteration in her daughter's looks, which had been materially benefited by their expedition to Darlington.

Mr. Trevillyan was already busily engaged in contemplating arrangements to be made for the accommodation of guests at the christening of his heir, for he never calculated that he could be less fortunate than Colonel Desburgh or Mr. Fanshaw. He took care from this time not to do or say any thing which might disturb the serenity, or hurt the feelings of his wife. He wrote to the highest of his acquaintance, requesting them to stand sponsors to his heir; and he received such answers as fully satisfied his self-importance. He felt fast approaching that consequence which the birth of a son gives to a man of fortune; — one would absolutely suppose from his actions, that he thought his wife had obtained a patent for bringing sons only into the world. — The week, the day, the hour, at last

arrived:—the suspense and anxiety of the mother was now equally shared by Mr. Trevillyan; but whether it was in the character of the expecting father, or the affectionate husband, or both, we leave our readers to decide.

Hour after hour passed, and the most dreadful apprehension prevailed; it was thought next to an impossibility that both his wife and child could be saved. Hesitation and uncertainty which of the lives he preferred, rose in his mind,—but he was spared giving them utterance;—for while he was yet doubtful, the physician (who had attended as well as the accoucheur) hastened to inform him that all was over, and that they both lived.

The father exclaimed, “Thank you, sir; a fine boy is it?”

“No, sir,” returned the physician, “it is a little—a very little girl; but I hope we shall rear it. Mrs. Trevillyan, however, is by no means out of danger;

the house, and every thing round it, must be kept in perfect stillness."

"Pshaw," said Mr. Trevillyan, in a tone of disappointment, "a girl!" and immediately left the room. The physician was astonished; he had always been used to hear the warmest expressions of gratitude to Heaven, particularly upon the birth of the first-born: — it is true he had known the ardour of thankfulness a little weakened by frequent repetitions; but, upon the first occasion! it was quite out of *good-*

*8.

Mrs. Trevillyan had always been much liked and admired in the neighbourhood; but *he* was too cold, and too proud, to allow any intimacies; and as they were generally seen together, they were what is called a happy couple.

This was Mr. Trevillyan's first disappointment in life, and he did not feel it less because it was of his own creation. Hitherto he had had no vexations, no trials: his wife was thoroughly amiable

and sweet-tempered ; and though her affection for him was never enthusiastic, yet she was attentive to his wishes, and very desirous of pleasing him. His rents were duly paid, and he had promised himself he was secure of keeping these rents in the family for generations ; for the idea of their going to the Fortescues always made him irritable, — he hated the very name. — The birth of a daughter then, of this unoffending little wretch ! was to open the flood-gates of her father's wrath and ill-humour ; and, alas ! it ran in full tide ever after.

From this time we see him no more the agreeable companion, or the cheerful friend, as he was in town before his marriage : — he was no longer the attentive husband, the indulgent landlord, or the kind master. The natural sternness perceptible in early youth, became severity in middle age ; and promised to degenerate into morose ill-temper in advanced life.

Mrs. Trevillyan continued in imminent danger for a fortnight ; and Dr. Cleverton pronounced, that it was entirely owing to her fortitude and exertion that she survived her illness.

The child, contrary to all expectation, thrived well ; and the mother found inexpressible pleasure in its infantine sounds.

She had repeatedly asked if there was no letter of anxiety or congratulation, from Darlington ; and when her mother answered in the negative, she thought them unkind. Her husband had visited her two or three times ; but when the nurse presented the baby, dressed out purposely for his admiration, and expected commendation for her good management, he put it from him with indifference, and left the room.

Mrs. Mordant's indignation was greatly roused ; but she dreaded awaking emotions in her daughter, which might, in her present state, prove fatal. But

the next day, when he brought an open letter in his hand, and said, “ Madam, I’ll thank you to answer it,” she felt her sensations too impetuous for concealment or control.

The letter was addressed to Mrs. Trevillyan, and expressed Mrs. Fanshaw’s extreme distress at having had no communication from Eldrington for more than three weeks, although she knew the time was long past when she expected to be confined; — that she had written, ten days ago, a letter of anxious enquiry; but receiving no answer, both Fanshaw and herself were mutually uneasy.

“ ‘What, sir?’ said Mrs. Mordant, with great severity, ‘is it possible you have not written to such kind and dear friends,’ to apprise them of my daughter’s danger, and the birth of your child?”

“ No, madam,” returned he, “ I had no pleasure in proclaiming my disappointments.”

“ Disappointments ! sir,” said she;

" no man but yourself could have thought them such. Had you lost them both," and she shuddered at the idea, " you would perhaps have ——"

" Oh, hush, my dear mother," said her agitated daughter.

The appeal brought instant recollection to Mrs. Mordant, and she turned from him with a look of undisguised contempt and indignation, which for a moment gave rise to some qualms of conscience, if not of contrition, in his breast. He turned and went up to his wife, and enquired how she felt herself; but this proof of his negligence and indifference had struck her so forcibly, that she had no power to speak. She hid her face in the bed-clothes, and gave way to her emotion.

Mrs. Mordant became alarmed, and with a voice which commanded obedience, ordered him to " leave the room." She then, after having endeavoured to soothe her daughter, wrote hastily to Mrs. Fan-

shaw, but in a manner which evidently showed her agitation. Dinner was announced just as she had finished it, but she was much too indignant to meet her son-in-law with composure : she sent word she "should not attend it;" and she saw no more of Mr. Trevillyan for two days.

The first letter from Darlington had arrived four days after the accouchement, when every thing in the sick chamber was kept as quiet as possible. Mr. Trevillyan, therefore, put it into his pocket, where it had lain disregarded ever since.

He was sitting brooding over his disappointment in the library, when he was greatly surprised and annoyed by seeing Mr. Fanshaw's carriage driving as fast as four post horses could draw it round the sweep. He was by no means in a humour to receive visitors, and particularly those visitors ; and he instantly determined to show them that

he considered them only as birds of passage, making a call on their road. But he might have saved himself the trouble of any such determination—Mrs. Fanshaw came alone, excepting the child and his nurse.

An hour after the receipt of Mrs. Mordant's letter, this truly affectionate woman was in her carriage on her road to Eldrington. Her husband cheerfully resigned her, whom he loved with the most tender regard, to her suffering friend. He, however, attended her the two first stages, and would willingly have accompanied her in her visit, but that he feared his presence might not be convenient where there must exist so much anxiety; but he requested she would write immediately, and if there was the slightest shadow of invitation, he would join her. He then kissed her and his sweet boy, and slowly returned to his lonely home. But she lost nothing in his estimation by this absence; for as he went from room to

room, its solitary appearance only brought her with fresh pleasure to his mind. In every apartment there was some proof of her elegant taste, some specimen of her genius and accomplishments : these, however, were acquirements which might be equalled, if not surpassed, by many women of superior talents and education. But when the evenings came, which were so delightfully passed either in chemical experiments, in reading to her, or in accompanying her when she played or sang, or in listening to the sound of her peculiarly melodious voice in conversation,—then it was that he felt the full force of the sacrifice he had made. But he was too affectionate to be selfish ; and when he afterwards wrote, he spoke not of his loneliness, lest it should make her shorten her stay.

When Mrs. Fanshaw alighted from her carriage at the Hall, “ I am very angry with you, Mr. Trevillyan,” said she, half jokingly, “ for not writing to

me; and you see I'm come^{*} to punish you with my company for some time. Sea-bathing is very agreeable and beneficial to me, so I come uninvited:—but pray let me see my friend, 'naughty man that you are !'

Mr. Trevillyan, stammered out some excuse for his omission, an apology for not having invited her, and his pleasure at seeing her; but a quick glance of her eye detected the insincerity of all this: she did not, however, notice it otherwise. Mr. Trevillyan led her up stairs, and introduced her where she was a much more welcome guest. His wife was reclining upon a sofa, and looking nearly as pale as her robe, when she entered;—but she was alive to the pleasure of being folded to the bosom of that affectionate friend.

This proof of the extreme kindness of that friend, contrasted with the absolute want of common attention she experienced elsewhere, quite overcame her, and she

fainted in fier arms. She was some time ere she recovered : she was then taken to her bed, and not allowed to speak.

Mrs. Mordant was very thankful for the benefit of such a companion. They were now left alone ; and having always lived in the happiest terms of intimacy, there was no necessity for hiding any thing from each other. "They had therefore a very unreserved conversation ; and Mrs. Fanshaw expressed herself quite shocked at what she termed the brutality of Mr. Trevillyan. She caressed the little infant with maternal fondness, and mercifully repeated the promise made to its mother.

Dinner was announced, and it was quite necessary the ladies should attend ; and they agreed that it was more politic not to show resentment to him, as it was just possible he might take the liberty of thinking that he was master of his own castle, and should be glad to choose his own guests. " Not that I should be

very quick in taking such a hint," said Mrs. Fanshaw, " while I feel that my presence is serviceable to my friend — and if the man absolutely turns me out, it shall go hard if I do not contrive to run away with her too."

When they entered the dining-room, they were astonished to see a magnificent service of plate paraded on the sideboard and table. The dinner passed heavily, as if there was no heart and no sentiment in common to the party.

We have frequently remarked, that if there is one point upon which people differ, and which is therefore carefully excluded from conversation, whether it be politics or domestics, there always appears a weight upon the spirits, a confinement which prevents all ease and sociability. Here there were several points at variance, upon which it was necessary to be silent; and though great etiquette and civility was observed, there was no cordiality. There appeared a great deal of stately

dulness ; three servants waited, where there were only three people at table.

Our ladies did not indulge Mr. Treillyair with much of their company after dinner. "Oh ! ho !" said Mrs. Fanshaw, when she again seated herself in the easy chair of his dressing-room, which he was very unwillingly obliged to forego during his wife's indisposition, " I find all this ostentatious ceremony is to let me know I am a stranger, rather than an Intimate ; and the parade with which he treats me is to indicate that I am not expected to stay long. But I shall tire him out, I ~~can tell~~, him ; — so he may just put his old plate, the collection of centuries, into his coffers again."

Day after day, however, the massy plate was displayed, and there was an increase rather than diminution of ceremony ; but Mrs. Fanshaw would not appear to see it, and took no hint from it. She breakfasted in the dressing-room with Mrs. Mordant ; after which her carriage

was generally at the door to take her and her little boy to bathe ; and she daily wrote to her husband, to say how much they were improved by it. She therefore seldom saw Mr. Trevillyan till dinner, when he was always in attendance to hand her to her seat.

The Invalid, cheered by the good spirits and happy countenance of her friend, recovered daily. She was soon enabled to accompany her for airing ; and in the course of nearly five weeks after her arrival, Mrs. Trevillyan once more took the head of her table.

Soon after this, Mr. Trevillyan made an opportunity of asking her, how long her friends meant to remain in *his* house? — said, he thought it a great liberty of any one to take up their abode there unasked, and desired she would by no means press their continuance.

Mrs. Trevillyan felt shocked ; but she thought this was a proper opportunity to speak to him of his child, and she re-

quested to know when it would be his pleasure that she should be christened ;—she informed him that her brother had offered to stand godfather to her, and her mother and Mrs. Fanshaw had made similar proposals.

Mr. Trevillyan's countenance darkened ;—“Madam,” said he, “if the ladies stay for that, I beg it may be over as soon as possible :—but for your brother, I desire it to be distinctly understood, that when I married you, I had no idea of making my house an hôtel for your friends., Mrs. Fanshaw’s making such a visitation, has already been an unnecessary expense, and I do not feel myself at all inclined to continue it. If it is requisite, I can stand myself to your child,—or I’ll tell you what you may do,” and his face brightened at the happy thought he had imbibed, “you may ask Mr. Fanshaw to come, he likes to be busy ; and then,—let us see,—he may be here on Monday

night, then the christening shall be on Tuesday, and they may all go off on Wednesday. And now, madam, that you know my will, I expect you will second my views: I am going to town upon business, so they can't stay here." — Saying this, he very coolly took his departure from her presence, and left her to digest his altered conduct as pleased her best.

She remained absorbed in unpleasant reflections until the noise of her baby, in her mother's arms, roused her. Mrs. Mordant saw something had agitated her, but Clara did not make her a party to this conversation and her uneasiness. She wrote to her brother, to say Mr. Trevillyan was obliged to leave home upon business, and therefore she must, however much it militated against her inclinations, decline his offer.

Mr. Fortescue had also written a very affectionate letter, inviting her, her husband, and baby, to town for the winter. — This she had not courage to show

Mr. Trevillyan, and she knew her wishes would not be consulted, and that he would put a decided negative upon any such scheme.

Tuesday came, and it brought Mr. Fanshaw, who met his amiable wife with that heartfelt pleasure, which none but such minds are capable of feeling :—his presence, too, seemed to recall his host to some sort of better humour.

After dinner, the little Christian was brought into the parlour ; — it was a much prettier infant than those of that age generally are ; and it was so lively and animated, that Mr. Fanshaw declared, excepting his own, he had never seen so lovely a child.

Mr. Trevillyan had never examined it till now, and was quite surprised to find that it really was a beautiful child ;—he took her in his arms, and imprinted the first paternal kiss she had ever received. The little creature stretched out her arms, and appeared to notice

him ; and from this time, he deigned to look upon her with something like kindness.

The Fanshaws now proposed, that as Mr. Trevillyan was leaving home, Mrs. Trevillyan, and her mother, and child, should return with them to Darlington ; — but this was not permitted, — he would not hear of it. The friends separated with regret ; — but Mr. Trevillyan felt at home again when he saw their carriage drive off. Mrs. Mordant accompanied them for a short visit.

CHAP. XII.

Eliza thinks happiness consists in state,
She'd wed an idiot to eat off plate.

Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises.
Merry Wives of Windsor.

Hopes and Fears.

TIME passed rapidly on, and the spring was far advanced; but Mr. Trevillyan forgot his business, and never left home, where he continued in tolerably ill humour, making himself, and all around him, as uncomfortable as possible.

Mr. and Mrs. Fanshaw had been passing a gay winter in town: — Miss Eliza Dennison had been invited by some friends to accompany them to Leamington, which she joyfully accepted, and thought it a happy escape from the stupidity of the Rectory.

Mrs. Langton found herself alone, and entirely upon "her own hands just now ; so she wrote to Miss Dennison, to know what she was doing at Leamington, and whether there was any thing going on worthy her attention. Nothing could be so apposite to, that damsels views at this juncture; — the party she was with were just leaving it, at the very moment when she flattered herself she was in the high road to the attainment of all her dearest wishes.

To quit Leamington, at this time, was destruction to her hopes ; when, influenced, no doubt, by her guardian angel, Mrs. Langton offered to join her. She instantly wrote her anxious intreaties to lose no time on the road, and she had the happiness of seeing her arrive the very evening which preceded the departure of her other friends.

As economy was the order of the day, (and night too,) they slept in the same room ; — and there, many a plan was

cogitated, — many a scheme laid : but Eliza had now too much experience to speak so as to be overheard, — Southampton had taught her a lesson in that.

There was, among many others, a wealthy West Indian, newly arrived in England, and who was travelling about the kingdom in search of health and pleasure. He was dark-complexioned, and very plain in his person ; a man of great vanity, and very little intellect : — his delight was in the brilliancy and splendour of his carriage and liveries, and to have every thing belonging to him equally well appointed. In short, to be very conspicuous was the acmé of his ambition.

We are afraid we have no right to wonder — for the case is too common, — that the ladies were all vying with each other for the honour of a seat by his side on the dicky of his landau. None ever enjoyed it, unless they were particularly well dressed.

There was a style, an air of fashion

about Eliza Dennison, superior to the generality of young women :—her clothes were not rich, or particularly handsome ; but every one allowed that she had the art of putting them on better than most other young ladies :—her figure was beautiful and graceful, and her face handsomer than either of her sisters ; so the offers of the envied seat to her were much more frequent than to any other lady. Sometimes, too, he allowed her to take the reins, and was quite astonished at her skill ; but she had had a very good preceptor in her father.

There was always one or two allowed to occupy the inside of Mr. Melvington's fine landau. Eliza had some fears of introducing a rival in Mrs. Langton ; but she thought of securing her fidelity by other means ; so she made her her confidant, and gave many promises for the future, if she would only assist her in securing him. And having thoroughly explained themselves, and their designs to each

other, the compact was settled, and Mrs. Langton introduced to the wealthy object of their schemes. He was enchanted with her, and Eliza, at first, heartily repented the experiment she had made. But for once Mrs. Langton was honourable ; — she soon found nothing was to be made of him at cards — he never gambled : and that he took much too good care of his money to part with a guinea without value received. There was no other way then to turn this precious ingot to account, but by marrying him to her friend, and she industriously set about it.

The next day she was offered a seat on 'the dicky,' and Eliza saw them set off with doubtful satisfaction. However, Mrs. Langton took an opportunity of speaking of Eliza Dennison, and brought round the subject so judiciously, that she made him suppose that he himself had started it. She praised her highly, and spoke of her talents with the warmest encomiums.

Mr. Melvington was not what is called a marrying-man, yet he found himself much pleased at the conversation, and not quite satisfied which of the ladies he liked best. He divided his attentions between them, paid them high compliments, and at the end of a fortnight, fancied himself very near falling in love; and Mrs. Langton assured him it was with Eliza.

After a conversation one day, when he had been drawn in to be more explanatory of his admiration than he intended, he called himself to an account for what he was doing; — and fearing lest he should commit himself still farther, he ordered his servants to have all things in readiness to set off the next morning for Cheltenham.

When most of the company had assembled at breakfast, Mr. Melvington's carriage drove up, evidently packed for a journey. The ladies were alarmed, and could not tell what to think of it.

The hero, soon after, entered the room, and took his usual seat by Eliza ; and told her that he had been delayed three weeks longer than he intended staying, merely by the force of hot charms ; but that now he was immediately obliged to go to Cheltenham. He earnestly hoped, however, he should have the good fortune to meet both the ladies again ; for he knew none who had so strongly interested him.

This, and a great deal more to the same effect, and something indeed still more complimentary, said slow to Eliza, he repeated many times ; but he was wise enough to take care that there should be no word she could take hold of, and she sat the image of surprise and despair.

The ladies had flattered themselves that the game was in their hands ; what then was their dismay, at finding the bird on its wing untouched !

Mr. Melvington had watched the countenance of Eliza when he men-

tioned his intended departure, and felt his vanity gratified that his influence over her should be witnessed by so many people. Yet, in the midst of his triumph the cruel man tore himself away; and without any prospect of a future meeting, farther than chance and accident might afford, he mounted his dicky, and with many kisses of his hand, drove off.

What was now to be done? was he to be allowed to escape, when he had been so nearly trapped? Certainly not — the genius of intrigue forbade it.

The next morning Mrs. Langton entered the breakfast-room, with a dreadful headache, and exceedingly languid. She had now just found out that Leamington did not agree with her; she had never been well since the first day of her arrival.

She was advised to go to Cheltenham instead of Leamington; but Miss Eliza. Dennison was so fond of this place, that

she had induced her to come there; unless, however, she found herself materially better, in a few hours, she should set off, as she dreaded a low fever, to which she was subject, and which always began in this way. The result was, that long before dinner, the fair ones had taken wing for Cheltenham.

They arrived there the next morning, and going to the library, they soon found out where Mr. Melvington had taken up his quarters, and they took lodgings in the immediate vicinity, wisely judging that there would be more opportunity of privacy there than at a boarding-house.

Mr. Melvington had certainly admired Eliza, and he felt very stupid and very solitary where he was: there was nothing there which could for a moment engage his attention — not a woman he could possibly offer a seat upon his dickey to; and it looked knowing to be seen driving a handsome well-dressed woman.

He was again thinking of shifting his

quarters, when, in the Well-walk, to his surprise, and possibly pleasure, he met Mrs. Langton and her friend.

The former complained much of ill health, though there was no corroboration of it in her looks. She said she had torn Eliza away from Leamington to accompany her, much against her inclination ; for she was so fond of that place, that, she believed, she would like to stay there all the summer.

Eliza blushed, and very prettily averted her face, and appeared to dread meeting his eyes : — she spoke little, and seemed by no means anxious to attract his attention. He accompanied the ladies to their lodgings, and promised to call again in the course of the morning ; and said he would order his carriage to be brought to him there, when he hoped an airing would be beneficial to her.—He was by no means averse from showing two such handsome women to his male companions.

All this promised well—what followed was still better. He came punctually to his appointment; and when the landau drove up, Mrs. Langton observed that she did not feel well enough to venture on the dicky; but having a book in which she was much interested, she would, with his leave, take the inside, while Eliza would go with him. To this Eliza strongly objected, but was quite overruled by Mrs. Langton, and accordingly they set off.

The day was uncommonly fine, and all the visitors were riding or driving out. They met numbers, and Mr. Melviington frequently stopped to chat. In the evening he was asked by several dashers, “ who that very fine woman was that he was driving?” Some called him a monopoliser of beauty, and declared that the lady in the inside was as handsome as that on the outside. One offered a bet upon this point; asserting it as his opinion, that the girl upon the

dicky was the handsomest and the most stylish he had seen for many a day. All this was attacking Mr. Melvington on his vulnerable side ; and before he retircd to rest, he found himself more in danger, —more in love than ever.

The next day Mrs. Langton took her seat on the box, and Eliza staid at home. The former took occasion to remark how very much poor Eliza was changed within this fortnight ; that her spirits, which used to be so charming, were now totally gone ; and that although she exerted herself before company to appear cheerful, and to amuse her, yet, whenever she was left alone, she was always found in tears ; and then she ingeniously insinuated that she strongly suspected disappointed affection would ruin her health.

Mr. Melvington swallowed all this with the utmost greediness — it was a delicious repast for his insatiable vanity : — he did not immediately know what his intentions

were, or what he meant should result from his present feelings ; however, he determined her affection for him should be pretty generally known at Cheltenham, but he wished to dawdle on a little longer before he decided either way,—in the meanwhile he could shew her off to his admiring friends : but the gentleman was playing with those who had more insight into the game than he. So confident was he of his own strength, that he kept no guard over himself ; and one evening, being a little more excited than usual, he made a declaration of his love, which Eliza instantly construed into an offer of his hand, and she accepted it with ill-disguised avidity.

Mr. Melvington thought the lady rather anticipated him ; — but she looked very handsome, and was very much admired ; and though marriage was not amongst his list of blessings, yet he supposed he might do as well as his neighbours, so he gave himself up to love and sentiment.

Love certainly improves some men : — poor Mr. Melvington, however, was not intended by it ; — and what is so mawkish as sentiment from a fool ?

However, Miss Dennison was courting the horses, landau, liveries, house in town, and twenty other fine things which she was to obtain through the medium of this object ; she, therefore, saw none of his defects, and was as blind as Cupid himself. She was presented with a set of pretty ornaments from Hamlet's, and every thing appeared to go on entirely to the young lady's satisfaction.

She wrote to all her friends, apprising them of her great good fortune, and amongst the rest to Mr. Trevillyan, to whom she said that she had had many opportunities of marrying, (as all young ladies who keep single rather longer than they wish have had,) but that she never now should marry from love ; she had therefore rejected them all ; but that, induced by the great

assiduity and importunities of Mr. Melvington, and feeling that all her friends would condemn her for refusing such an alliance, she had consented. His fortune was four thousand a year: he had already made her handsome presents, and that she had suffered herself to be persuaded to consent to so early a day as six weeks from the present time.

The day after all these letters had been dispatched, Mr. Melvington was joined by a West Indian friend, and by a gentleman who had been in the same house with the ladies and himself at Leamington.

His friend, Mr. Wharton, having learnt what was upon the carpet, and not having the highest of all possible ideas of his understanding, was talking one day with his Leamington acquaintance, who made no scruple of saying there never was a more dead-set at a man than that of these ladies at Mr. Melvington.

Mr. Wharton, the West Indian, instantly went to him, and, assisted by the other gentleman, rallied him so unmercifully, upon what he was pleased to call his folly, in saddling himself with such a clog as a wife, that poor Melvington, who could neither bear or parry ridicule, began to wish Miss Dennison at Jamaica: but as his wishes alone could not send her there, and as he smarted under the lash of Mr. Wharton's raillery, he confessed he began to be tired of it, and would put himself under his direction.

His friend saw the advantage he was gaining, and proposed a trip to Malvern, as a place he had not yet seen. He never left him till the carriage was at the door,—and Melvington was too much afraid of being a butt for his friend's ridicule to take leave of Miss Dennison.

They continued at Malvern for three weeks, although only proposing to stay three days. Mr. Melvington found his

love abate progressively, and at the end of this time he scarcely loved at all.

Miss Dennison had written repeatedly to him ; — but when love is upon the wane, nothing serves to make it go down so fast as importunity from the *ci-devant* object. Every letter, therefore, of her's caused a declension of his admiration, and it soon reached the last step. Mr. Wharton, quite satisfied of his cure, returned with him to Cheltenham.

Miss Dennison had repeatedly heard of her fugitive ; but every information was always accompanied with, “ they were to leave Malvern the day after I left them, and to return here.” But for this uncertainty, the ladies would, assuredly, have required the bracing air of those hills.

It may very naturally be imagined, that from whatever motive Eliza acted, she was now in a very awkward and unenviable situation. The thing had been made public enough ; and she

watched, with fretful anxiety, for the return of her swain.

One evening, however, she had the satisfaction of seeing her much longed-for carriage drive up to the Boarding-house, and she sat, with breathless agitation, waiting his visit ; she prepared herself to be pleased or offended, as circumstances required. But he was in no haste to pay it.

She refused to accompany Mrs. Langton to the rooms, because she was sure of his coming : — had she gone, she would have seen him, for he sauntered in with his friend. Mrs. Langton saw, but could not speak to him : — she went there upon business of more importance to herself, and she gave her whole attention to her cards. When the party broke up, she looked for him, but he was off.

The next morning they went to the Well, but he was not there. Many were the cogitations of the ladies ; and Eliza was just about writing to request an

interview, when they heard a rap at their door. She had just time to make up her mind how she should receive him, and what she should say to him, when a stranger was introduced, whom she instantly knew to be Mr. Wharton.

Mr. Wharton was a shrewd, sensible, cool-headed man, who thought himself quite a match for any argument which could be advanced by two women,—whom he certainly did not consider as the wisest part of the creation, and for whom he had not too much reverence.

He represented himself as coming from Mr. Melvington, with a message; that although he had the highest regard and opinion of Miss Dennison, yet his health and his habits were so unsettled, as to render it impossible he could ever be deserving the blessing of her hand; and, therefore, all things considered, he thought it by far the wisest plan to break off the matter entirely.

The ladies declared that to be quite impossible, and urged many reasons why it was so.

Mr. Wharton returned that, in his opinion, the woman who was bold enough to marry his friend, would be in no enviable situation.

Miss Dennison said, "that was her look out."

Mr. Wharton shifted his ground, and said, "that Mr. Melvington would be obliged to return to Jamaica."

The persevering lady would be "happy to accompany him all the world over, if it were necessary."

This tack, would not do, so he resorted to his grand auxiliary, which he was certain *must* be final.— He said, "Mr. Melvington had already formed a connection, which, though not a legal one, was, nevertheless, one which he was sure he would never break through."

"I'll take my chance for that, sir," returned the determined lady.

Provoked, indignant, and thoroughly confirmed in the suspicions he had of their laying a scheme to entrap his friend, he lost sight of the little delicacy or consideration he ever possessed for a lady's feelings or nerves, and accused them of laying a deliberate plot against his unwary friend ; and he said that had she consented to his proposition at first, he had been authorised to offer her a large sum of money by way of compensation for her disappointment ; but as he could bring proofs enough of their connivance in any court they may choose to sue him in, he defied them to get a guinea. He then rose, and left them to dine with what "appetite they may."

Thus baffled in every endeavour to get a rich husband, poor Eliza began to despair ; — and as the report of the approaching marriage was widely circulated, she did not like wearing the willow at Cheltenham. She determined, however, to sue Mr. Melvington for a breach

of promise of marriage, and longed for some one who would manage the business for her.

Mrs. Langton had enrolled herself with a set of card-players, who were not quite so well tutored as herself, — they parted with their money freely, and she pocketed it with equal complacency.

From this society, therefore, she had no inclination to move : and amongst the visitors at the rooms she saw Mr. and Mrs. Watson, who afforded herself and the company so much amusement at Southampton, and who had no objection to unlimited loo. She immediately made up to them, and they were quite delighted at the honour of the recognition : the next morning she called upon them, offered to show them the lions, and introduce them to her society. — This was the very thing they wanted ; and they thought Mrs. Langton the most charming woman in the world.

CHAP. XII.

So your follies fight against yourself.

Richard II.

Mortifications.

Miss Eliza Dennison had been introduced to the Watsons. But at that time her head (not her heart) was full of the bright visions of futurity which her marriage was to realise. Such people as these were then far beneath her acquaintance: but no sooner had the perfidious swain turned his back upon Cheltenham, and she had sorrowfully proved the downfall of all her hopes, than her policy returned. She considered that time flew fast, and that her youth would fly with it; and that as she had uniformly failed in her higher

schemes of action, it might be well now to descend a step.

There were many rich and highly respectable men in Birmingham, and her fashion and her beauty would cut a conspicuous figure there. Birmingham might be a *place de reserve*, when others had failed.

With this prudent foresight, she became very attentive to the Watsons, and even condescended to accompany them to a ball at the rooms, fully determined, however, not to dance with *him*, and putting all her wits in requisition how to escape it.

Mrs. Watson was very expensively dressed, and looked very pretty; but Eliza was always an ornament to a ballroom. She need not have given herself any annoyance or apprehensions about dancing with Mr. Watson; he appeared to have another crotchet in his head, and totally forgot that politeness required he should ask her.

He insisted they should place themselves near the entrance of the room, where he seemed to sit upon the tenter-hooks of expectation. He was dressed in an entire new suit of clothes, the very pink and extreme of fashion.

Eliza was very soon an object of attraction to the gentlemen; and the master of the ceremonies introduced her to a very desirable partner, and Mrs. Watson soon followed.

The master of the ceremonies finding a great scarcity of gentlemen, asked Mr. Watson to dance; but he "preferred sitting by at present," and he kept his station close to the door.

There were many damsels unwillingly become wall-flowers, and casting wistful looks upon the gay scene, in which they were not destined to partake.

The second dance of the first set was just commenced, when a dashing young woman, very naked and very undaunted in her appearance, entered, leaning upon the arm of an old gentleman, her father.

It was Miss Dareal, whom we once before met at Mrs. Mordant's party.

Mr. Watson had heard this young lady talked of in the billiard-room, as likely to be a leading character at Cheltenham;—many were thinking of the means of getting introduced to her. In fact, nothing was spoken of but Miss Dareal, and her large fortune.

This was much more than enough to fire Mr. Watson's ambition, and he determined to accomplish that by a *coup de main*, which others might be a month in obtaining. The moment she entered, and he saw the master of the ceremonies bowing, and hastening up to them, and looking round the room for a partner, he stepped forward and offered himself for an introduction to Miss Dareal for the dance.

The lady eyed him from top to toe,—but her eye had likewise glanced round the room,—none of the beaux she wished to engage were arrived; and as she was

too proud of her excellence in this accomplishment to relish sitting still by the side of her father, she yielded a haughty assent, and stood up..

Her partner had now obtained the summit of his wishes, and was very desirous of engaging her in conversation, until they reached the top of the room; and showed himself an adept in aping the follies of his superiors, by never being ready to dance when the figure required his attention.

The lady, however, did not repay his endeavours to amuse her by a single smile; she soon read his character, and gave a contemptuous monosyllable to his best and longest studied compliments and observations. She pretended not to hear any of his flattering speeches,— but our hero was not to be dismayed ; and as they were now arrived at the head of the set, he thought how much he should surprise and please her by his fine dancing. Off they set ; Mr. Watson jumped and

shuffled in and out, like a parched pea upon a hot shovel : nothing in the room could cope with him. And so great was the dread of the ladies for their flounces and furbelows, that they all with one accord, and a look of contempt, made way for him. He drew all eyes to himself, and appeared to think this the criterion of his merit : meanwhile the perspiration was running down his face in streams, we might almost say torrents, to the infinite amusement of the whole company.

Miss Darel had been used to attract all observation to herself, and by no means relished the monopoly of it by another; nor even would she choose to divide the attention with our hero. When therefore they came to about seven couples of the bottom, she walked down, and left Mr. Watson skipping by himself.— She was soon joined by the young men she had been looking for, to whom she stood talking : she was indeed very sa-

tirically quizzing her partner, when he came up to her. " O ho," said he, familiarly, " why you stole a march upon me ! " and then, in a tone of great self-complacency, he added, " warm work this, ma'am, amazing warm work ; but I think we got through it vastly well, didn't we ? I don't think I've been so hot for a long while, ma'am ; don't I look very hot ? "

Thoroughly provoked and disgusted with his vulgarity, and determined, if possible, to give him a set-down, she said, loud enough for all around her to hear, " Yes indeed, sir, you do ; and

Were there no diff'rence 'twixt *grace* and *grace*,
All heaven might shine upon your face."

Mr. Watson not immediately comprehending the meaning and point of the lines, (although delivered very articulately,) and catching the words grace and heaven combined with his own face, doubted not it was a very high compli-

ment ; with a grin, therefore, of undissembled delight, he made a very low bow.

The young men who surrounded her, and who were before ready to die with laughing, found this aggravation to the scene too much to withstand, so they indulged their risibility so loudly, that all attention was directed to them ; and the laugh with the lines was soon echoed through the rooms.

Great as was Mr. Watson's effrontery, it could not stand the ridicule and contempt which every where met his ear and his eye ; and without once thinking of his wife or Miss Dennison, he quickly made his retreat from this scene of mortification.

Mrs. Watson was dancing with a stranger, whose friend came up and acquainted him with the “ excellent joke ;” and though her partner, (knowing she was of the same party,) tried as much as he could to prevent her hearing it, she collected

enough to learn that some lines had been made upon her husband ; and the ironical smile with which they were repeated, shewed too plainly the nature of them. She was now, however, in her favourite element. Dancing to her was quite enchanting, — so she saw her husband glide out of the room, and congratulated herself that few knew how nearly she was connected with him.

Eliza Dennison too felt mortified that she had allowed herself to be in company in public with such a man. She was thankful, therefore, that he did not return to convey them home ; and Mrs. Langton being in the card-room, she, after having had some very pleasant dances, and been very much admired, returned with *her*.

Eliza, however, did not choose to lose the acquaintance, so she and Mrs. Langton called the next morning ; and so far were they from knowing anything of the affairs of the last night, that

they said they feared Mr. Watson must have been ill, by so suddenly quitting the rooms.

Quite pleased to think that the affront was not so public as he apprehended, he made up the matter with himself; and even took courage to venture to the billiard-room: — there, however, the significant smile of derision assailed him, and he soon found that he hated Cheltenham, where there was no good company, and determined to leave it next day.

Eliza called, and found them packing, on which occasion she expressed her regret so sensibly, that they gave her an invitation to Birmingham the next winter, the season of their festivities; and she promised to be with them if she could possibly get off from her numerous engagements.

She had written to Mr. Trevillyan the sad conduct of Mr. Melvington, which she represented as the more extraordi-

nary, as the affair was entirely his own seeking, and she had at first discouraged his addresses, and only yielded at last to his pressing importunities.

Mr. Trevillyan showed his wife both her letters, and from her representation of the case, they compassionated her ill usage ; he proposed to send her an invitation to Eldrington ; and although Clara never liked her, yet she was glad of any body, or any thing, which could break the heaviness of domestic dullness and discomfort. Her child, indeed, was now nearly sixteen months old, and was her constant amusement : her husband too was now looking forward again to the birth of an heir ; but as he found his wife did not really possess the patent he supposed, his views were somewhat tempered with doubt — and this did not make him the less fretful, nor was she more happy.

Miss Dennison arrived, and he soon

left off plaguing his wife, to attend to her.

Once during a long walk she began talking of Mr. Melvington, and solicited his protection and assistance in her scheme of retaliation upon him ; and after having discussed that affair, they naturally spoke of attachments in general,—of first attachments, how few of these were successful ; and then she sentimentally observed with a sigh, that the affections, once deeply engaged, were never thoroughly recovered. This observation was instantly confirmed in Mr. Trevillyan's mind by the thought of his wife :— he asked her if she alluded to herself ? and what became of her first attachment ? Eliza hesitated, blushed, and with a confusion, very like good acting, answered, that he who first won her regards, had not thought them worthy his acceptance, for the very moment he felt the interest he had in her heart, he left her for another.

Mr. Trevillyan was by no means without vanity — he felt rather an odd sensation just now ; but Eliza had no thought of committing herself farther than she could well extricate herself. She wished, by flattering him, to secure his zeal in her service, — but her own game was that of gaining a husband, not entering into an intrigue ; and she determined to pursue it with every effort in her power. She therefore took no notice of his countenance, or of the pressure of her arm, which was leaning upon his, but went on, — " For some time I felt very keenly, and was very unhappy : however, I called my pride to my aid, and, I believe, few knew my disappointment. I had several opportunities of marrying soon after — some very eligible ones ; but I was romantic then, and fancied my heart too deeply engaged to acknowledge a new master. — Poor Sophy, was before me, and I did not like the example. Miss Mor-

dant too was pining after her lover — and certainly she has proved the truth of my assertion. — By the way, what do you think of your rival?"

" My rival!" exclaimed Mr. Trevillyan, " do you not know that he died before I ever saw any thing of the family?"

" Dear me!" innocently said she, " I'm sure I thought from the connection between the families that you must have known — had I supposed you had been kept in ignorance — but perhaps then it is not true."

" Not true! what is not true?" said he, stopping short, " what do you mean?"

" I've gone too far to retreat, I see," said Eliza. " Mr. Fortescue is not dead, he was only shipwrecked; and, if I mistake not, he is now in England." This, however, was her own surmise, and, like most of her surmises — untrue. " I'm quite certain of what I tell you; but

pray do not mention it, or let it be supposed that I told you."

Mr. Trevillyan was extremely agitated; he took two or three hasty strides, and then quickly returned.—“Miss Dennison,” said he, “I believe few men are attached to their heirs, particularly when they happen to be only distantly related; there has always subsisted a coolness between that branch of the family and mine, and I will have as little to do with them as possible.—My estate, this very spot on which we stand,” added he, with rising choler, “is entailed upon him if I die without a son; and yet Mrs. Trevillyan is so careless of herself, that one would think she was in league with the family.—I had rather —— but do you know any more of Mr. Fortescue?”

“Nothing at all,” said she, having satisfied her mischievous propensity. They returned home, but Mr. Trevillyan was not inclined to talk: he had

now abundance of scope for indulging his spleen, — no doubt his wife's altered health and spirits was owing to her knowledge of Mr. Fortescue's return. — Jealousy now first took any *strong* hold upon his imagination ; he had often indeed been tenacious of her affection for Henry's memory, but it was idle to be jealous of a dead man.

He determined to go to town instantly and ascertain the truth of it ; Miss Dennison's law-suit furnished a good excuse — and she readily gave her promise to remain with his wife during his absence, and two days afterwards he set off.

Mrs. Trevillyan was by no means pleased at her companion, and would gladly have been left alone. She confined herself very much to her nursery, and to making preparations for her approaching confinement ; and Miss Dennison amused herself with exploring, and making herself acquainted with the different cottagers, with whom she often loitered.

ed, learning the news of the neighbourhood ; but she found this dull work, even more stupid than the Rectory, so she was quite delighted by a letter she received from her “dear friend” Mrs. Watson, giving her a pressing invitation to repair to Birmingham as soon as possible, as there was to be a musical festival held there, which was expected to be a very fine thing, and to which a particular friend of their’s, Lord Ansell, was appointed one of the stewards.

How glorious ! nothing could promise better ; and she must be quite mistaken in her idea of Mr. Watson’s society, since his particular friend was Lord Ansell.

Unlike a prophet then, he must be somebody in his own country — and certainly he was not honoured out of it.

She wrote to Mr. Trevillyan, to say she had long been under the promise of paying this visit to her valued friend, whenever the festival took place ; and

two days afterwards she bade adieu to Eldrington:

She was well received by Mr. and Mrs. Watson, who had a handsome house in Great Charles-street, a short walk from the shop.

The approaching gala seemed to have taken possession of the faculties of every person they saw, and her hopes were once more excited. Mr. Watson was all haste, all bustle, all activity; and appeared, as usual, to have some affair meditating.

There was to be a charitable subscription made at the doors of the church, and the plates were appointed to be held by the first men of the county. It was Mr. Watson's wish — for what purpose no one could divine — to hold one of these plates at a particular door.

There had been a strongly contested election very recently, and our indefatigable hero happily learnt, that the plate he sighed for, was to be held by the very

nobleman to whom he had given his most strenuous exertions,—and hence the boasted friendship between him and Lord Ansell.

Mr. Watson came home to dinner one day in high glee, rubbing his hands with great exultation:—“Ladies,” said he, “I have just been contriving a very pretty trip for you to-morrow morning; and as I know the sex are never sorry to show themselves, why I’ll give you the opportunity; and who knows, Miss Dennison, perhaps you may get a lord for your husband! more unlikely things have come to pass, I can tell you.”

He then proceeded to open his project; which was, that they should go to Lornton, (the seat of Lord Ansell,) and send up Mrs. Watson’s compliments, with a request to see his lordship; which having obtained, she was to remind his lordship that Mr. Watson was upon his committee during his election—had procured him many votes—and done him much

service ;—that all he asked, in return for these obligations, was simply to be allowed to be his proxy in holding the plate at the church.

Mrs. Watson highly approved the scheme of going to the lord—and she had no objection to the drive; but she did not like to pay the half of the carriage, (for of being at the whole expense she never had the least idea,) —she was going to start some objection, when he interrupted her, “ My life, don’t say a word about it—I have arranged it all—and a very handsome carriage will be here at eleven o’clock to-morrow. I know his lordship’s admiration of the sex, and I’m sure he can’t resist such beautiful ladies—leave me alone for managing these things.—Had I sent a note, he might have answered, ‘that it was impossible,’ but he can’t resist you—

“ When ladies sue, men give like gods.”

And if,” continued he, “ his lordship

should introduce you to his sisters, which is very likely, and they should ask you to stay dinner, which I dare say they will; you may stay.— You will pay no more for your carriage— I have made that a bargain— you may trust me for that—and I'll come out and dine with you. I remember very often, during the election, Lord Ansell used to say how glad he'd be to see me at Lornson. And one day, when I was saying how much I admired his grounds, and that I dared to say his house was as fine, he said. ‘ Mr. Watson, why don't you come and see.’

I have often thought his lordship would be offended with me for not going; but this is a good opportunity of showing his lordship that I did not mean to slight him. I shall try to be with you at dinner, but I have a great deal to do; and at any rate I shall come before you have left your desert.’

Eliza was now no novice, and she began to suspect the intimacy with the

Lord was not quite so great as she had been led to understand ; however, she had, as Mr. Watson observed, no sort of disinclination to show herself where it was likely she might attract : — and as for the propriety of the visit, or the application for the plate, she was a stranger — not a party concerned — and by no means accountable for it.

The morning proved a fine one — the carriage came to a minute — the ladies dressed themselves to their own different tastes — and, attended by a servant in a very gay livery, off they set.

The country was beautiful, and Eliza was much pleased with it.

Upon their arrival at Lornton, Mrs. Watson punctually obeyed the injunctions of her husband — she sent a request to see his lordship. The servant returned to the carriage, saying that his lordship begged they would alight, and he would attend them instantly. They were shown

into a small room, where they found that *instantly* was a very indefinite term.

Their patience was nearly exhausted when he entered. Mrs. Watson put on her best manners while she made her request; and had she not endeavoured to be superlatively amiable, he must have been highly pleased with her; but her affectation gave her a vulgarity which could not be overlooked.—In the zeal for the furtherance of her husband's cause, she quite forgot to introduce Miss Dennisop, to whom, however, his lordship had bowed, and kept his eyes upon *her* while he listened to the petitioner.

Mr. Watson judged rightly for once. His lordship was a man of gallantry, and had seldom seen two prettier advocates; yet, so awkward was the boon, that he declared he did not know how to manage it. Had the ladies themselves offered to take the plate from him, he should not have hesitated a moment, as he knew

too well they were irresistible ; but that all he now could grant would be, that Mr. Watson should hold the plate as if relieving him, while he must be near.— He then left them, and returned in a minute, as if he had been merely to fetch some fruit, which he offered them. Soon after, however, they were joined by two other gentlemen, and presently after, another young man, and they all entered very unceremoniously into conversation with our ladies.

Mrs. Watson was quite delighted — she talked away with much more vivacity than good sense ; but Eliza knew perfectly well what good manners were ; and she knew, too, how to repulse those who were inclined to be too familiar. She now found, that far from the expected introduction to the young ladies, and their invitation to dinner, a few grapes, and many very fine compliments, were the most substantial things they were likely to get ; she therefore gave

her companion many a hint ; but that dear friend was too highly pleased with her visit to wish to shorten it, and poor Eliza found herself in a very disagreeable situation. It was now that she felt the full force of her own imprudence, in allowing herself to be made a party to this strange adventure.

The young men began speaking of the game of billiards they had just been playing. Mrs. Watson said, Miss Dennison played exceedingly well. The gentlemen, one and all, were now clamorous that they should go to the billiard-room. Eliza declined ; but Mrs. Watson exclaimed, " Lord, Eliza, what makes you so odd to-day : do you not remember how well you used to play, when a certain gentleman, that shall be nameless, used to attend you ? Besides," added she, willing to let them know Miss Dennison had high acquaintances, " remember Sir John Neerdowel, and how you used to play with him — I heard it all."

" Sophy Dennison, by all that's rare," said one of the gentlemen.

" You are mistaken, sir," answered Eliza, haughtily.

" Not so much mistaken, neither," said the provoking Mrs. Watson ; " it is Miss Eliza Dennison."

The young men seemed to acquire fresh presumption from the recognition. One of them asked after Mrs. Langton — spoke with more freedom — and was quite inclined to play off the familiar.

Eliza gave many a beseeching look to her incorrigible hostess to go away.

" Well," said she, " if you will only indulge these gentlemen, by showing them how well you can play one game of billiards, I'll go as soon as you have done."

Eliza knew she played well and gracefully. At any other time, or, rather, in other circumstances, she would have been delighted to have showed off, but at present, she felt in a most improper situation

— there was a great contest between her prudence and her vanity ; — grieved are we to say the latter was prevalent, and they adjourned to the billiard-room.

In passing along a gallery, they saw from a window some ladies walking in the plantations near the house.

“ Dear me,” said Mrs. Watson, “ I had quite forgotten to ask after your sisters, my lord ; but there they are, I declare. — What a pretty place that is — I have often wished to walk in it — and what a sweet day it is. Miss Dennison was never in this county before, and I should like to show her some of the beauties. Do look, Eliza, what a fine place it is.”

The hint, however broad, was not taken ; and one of the gentlemen, Mr. Dornford, engaged Eliza to play.— She began reluctantly, appearing to submit to what was inevitable, rather than to have any pleasure in it. She soon, however, became interested : — she played

with great success, and the bets ran high upon her. She beat her adversary two or three games; meanwhile time advanced, and she heard a bell — the first warning for dinner..

The young men, seeing Eliza now quite out of all patience, begged she would not hurry Mrs. Watson; for themselves, they said, they preferred staying with such charming companions to the finest dinner that could be offered them.

Eliza became alarmed: — she hastily rang the bell, and ordered the carriage, and followed the servant out.

The gentlemen hastened after her, and Mr. Dornford handed her into the carriage; and, as Mrs. Watson was slowly following, he had an opportunity of saying many fine soft things, which, though spoken in a more respectful tone than they had used in the incense offered her friend, yet required all her haughtiness to repel.

She answered only by indignant looks ;
and when the carriage drove off, she
threw herself into the corner of it, over-
whelmed with mortification.

CHAP. XIV.

I charge thee fling away ambition,
By that sin fell the angels.

A Reprimand.

THEY had not proceeded far on their road home, ere they perceived Mr. Watson galloping towards them as fast as his horse could carry him. "God bless me," said he, as he came up to them, "why I was just coming out to dine with you, — what makes you in such haste to return? I told you, you would pay no more for the carriage, and that I should come out to you. — What then *could* make you come back before dinner?"

"We were never asked to stay," said Eliza.

"No," observed his wife, "we certainly were not asked; but, I must say, that was entirely Miss Dennison's fault; — nothing could be more genteel and polite than Lord Ansell and three more gentlemen were; but she really was, I must acknowledge, hardly civil to them; and she was in such evident haste to be gone, that I declare I fear she must have offended them. I really *did* think Miss Dennison had seen company enough to prevent her feeling awkward in the presence of a lord."

"Dear me, Miss Dennison," said Mr. Watson, "I'm very sorry to hear all this; — I would not affront Lord Ansell for all the world. I wish I had been a little earlier, I might have given you confidence by my presence; but I could not get Mr. Gibson's horse, for he wanted it to drive his wife out to tea. — But when I told him I wanted it to go to Lornton, where I was to dine with my friend, Lord Ansell, he said he

would leave his servant at home, and put his horse into the gig, although almost too old for that use. You see what consequence it is to be *in* with a lord—I hope he is not offended!—So Gibson sent me the horse about an hour ago, and I have not let the grass grow under his feet:—and now,” added he, in a tone of great disappointment, “I don’t know whether I should go on and make an apology for Miss Dennison to my lord, or return with you.”

“Sir,” said Eliza, warmly, “do as you please about going or returning, but I beg leave to *insist* that no apology is made in my name;—the gentlemen were never introduced to us;—and,” added she, very pointedly, “in the company I have been used to, ladies are not very forward to enter into familiar conversation with gentlemen, of whose names even they are perfectly ignorant.—I am only vexed with myself that I ever got out of the carriage.”

"Why," observed Mr. Watson, in a tone of conciliation, "there may be something, to be sure, in that."

"Nonsense!" replied his wife, "I have no patience with such excuses; — every body must know they were not likely to meet improper company at a lord's."

"Indeed, my life," said her wavering husband, "you are right,—where is one to seek good company, if not at a lord's? But pray tell me does his lordship consent to my request?"

His wife told him how far she had been successful, and it seemed to content him; — and as there was now no plausible excuse for his going forward to Lornton, he was, very reluctantly obliged to return.

They were within one mile of Birmingham, when a fresh mortification awaited him:—Mr. Gibson and his wife in their gig appeared in view, approaching at a snail's gallop, although he was whipping

his poor old horse, and using every endeavour to coax him forward ; but he had been used to go with a companion, and see that companion before him,—now he would hardly put one foot before another.

Mr. Watson called to his wife to know how he should avoid meeting them, but there was no possibility of doing that ; so he puzzled his brain for some excuse.

“ Gracious me !” said Mrs. Gibson, in high indignation, “ so there you are with our horse, while we have been an hour getting this length, because you were going to dine with my lord.”

“ Aye,” said old Gibson, “ did you not tell me you were going to dine with Lord Ansell ? — but, as I take it, your face is turned the wrong way for that. Why you can’t have been there and back, by this time, although I see you have sweated my poor beast more than ever he has been in my service. Poor thing ! he’s all of a smoke.”

All this time Mr. Watson was trying to hammer out an apology, and finding nothing better, said, " Why, my dear friend, to tell you the truth, I promised to go to join my ladies there, but not seeing me so soon as they expected, they felt they wanted some countenance ; so the young lady was bashful, and made my wife come away."

" So then I am to understand," said Mr. Gibson, with some severity, " that you had no invitation. Young man, I knew and respected your father, he was a plain good tradesman, and, for his sake, I'll give you a little advice ; — stay at home as he did, and mind your shop, instead of running after people who will be civil to you as long as they want you, and then laugh at you, when you are no longer of service. I have been weak enough to lend a helping hand this time to your folly ; and while you were galloping about with my poor horse, we have been detained so long on the road, that we are now too late for our engagement ;

— nevertheless, if it teaches a lesson to the son of my old friend, I shall not regret our disappointment.”

Our poor hero was glad to be dismissed at the end of this reprimand, and he was thankful too that his wife did not hear it, for the carriage had gone on, after bowing *en passant*:

When arrived at home, the whole trio were out of humour, and the lady of the house did not allow her politeness to her guest to hide her ill-temper, which she vented freely upon all. The driver came in to be paid ; — Mrs. Watson, who had calculated the exact shares, declared her's to be twelve shillings, — but then she said she had paid eighteen-pence turnpikes, so she had nine-pence to deduct.

Eliza was astonished. However, she found she was expected to pay, and she did so ; but she determined it should be the last excursion of that kind she would ever engage in. She had suffered

many mortifications, many disappointments, — but she had never been used to ill-bred society, and she found it not at all to her taste.

Now it is necessary our readers should know, that the Marchioness of Hastings was to attend the grand festival, and to take up her abode at the house of the nobleman who had opposed Lord Ansell at the election.

Mr. Watson had an illegitimate son, for whom he was very anxious to procure a cadetship to India. He had no sort of interest himself in this way, and knew that any application to the opposition nobleman would only militate against his cause; so his fertile brain suggested the idea of presenting a petition to the Marchioness, to whom the plate was an introduction; and there was no time so proper as when her heart was opened to benevolence.

The morning came, and the wished-for plate was in Mr. Watson's hand, and Lord Ansell talking to a group of friends

near the spot, and keeping an eye upon him, for the purpose of discovering the motive for his anxious solicitation.

The Marchioness appeared,—her name was announced by the crowd. Mr. Watson presented the plate, and as soon as she had made her donation, he immediately thrust it into the first hand he could find, and hastened after her, and presented the petition.

The Marchioness was surprised ; but with great affability stopped to enquire the nature of the paper,—told him she would read it, and let him know the result. He had given his address in the paper.

Elated with his success, and the condescension of the Marchioness, he returned very much self-satisfied to Lord Ansell, who was holding the plate. His lordship was very desirous to know what was the object he had taken so much pains about ; and our hero was too confident to need much interrogation.

"Why," said Lord Ansell, "you have made a great fuss for little profit, why did you not ask for a writership at once? it is just as likely you'll get the one as the other."

Mr. Watson did not observe the tone of irony with which his lordship spoke, but ~~the~~ determined to profit by the *kind hint*. He returned home in excessive good-humour, and Eliza was highly delighted by the fine music she had heard. In the evening they prepared for the ball, and Mr. Watson, while contemplating the beauty of his wife and her rich dress, and the fashionable appearance of Eliza, could not help assuring them that he was certain Lord Ansell would lead them out; that no doubt Mrs. Watson would be his first choice, and desired her therefore to keep herself disengaged, if possible, as he might be late.

They were nearly the first in the room, and Mrs. Watson, agreeably to the hint she had received, kept herself

behind, and somewhat contemptuously refused three partners of her own class in society ; but Eliza, who had more insight to the matter, gladly engaged herself, by the introduction of the steward, to an officer, and she had a very pleasant dance.

It was late when the Ansell party entered ; but as soon as he perceived them, Mr. Watson went up to them, and made his salutation with some familiarity, but his friend Lord Ansell was no candidate at present ; he had a lady upon each arm, and therefore, with a distant bow, and a cool “ how are you, sir,” passed on.

Mrs. Watson had courtesied and simpered, but, alas ! she was unseen : her beauty, which her husband flattered himself must win all hearts, was totally eclipsed by that of one of his lordship’s companions, and she had no fashion to boast. Mrs. Watson had observed her three friends whom she had seen at Lornton, and she now endeavoured to catch their attention, but they had other objects in

view ; two of them danced with Lord Ansell's sisters, and the other singled out another lady. Baulked in all these fine hopes, and prevented from enjoying her favourite amusement, she vented her ill-humour upon her husband for keeping her all that time without a partner.

She was, soon after the first two dances were ended, asked to stand up by a saddler, who was an intimate with, and kept the next shop to Mr. Watson :— there were no hopes of higher partners, so she consented.

Meantime, her first partner, finding Eliza a girl much to his taste, introduced her to some of his brother-officers,— they all admired her exceedingly — and knowing she was of military extraction, they gave themselves the air of preferring to dance with one in their own sphere, as they were pleased to call her, than mixing in society with they did not know whom.

Soon after this set of dancing began,

the Ansell party left the room, but the three gentlemen returned, just as Eliza was engaged in a quadrille. The party knew the figure, and danced it well; and as it was at this time rather a novelty, there was a ring of spectators formed round them.

Mrs. Watson knew nothing of them, but she and her partner were standing to look on. Presently she heard the voices of her Lornton acquaintance in high admiration of her friend, whom they declared had the finest figure they had ever seen: they spoke of her grace, her attitudes, and were lavish in her praise.

Mrs. Watson wished the saddlers at Jericho: — had he been a grocer, or an oilman, or even a chimney-sweep, he need not be known, but gentlemen she knew took care to order their own saddles, and to make his shop a kind of rendezvous. However, the opportunity of speaking to them was not to be lost —

so she put on one of her most agreeable smiles as she turned and spoke — the heroes had now no other ladies to gallant — and as they returned for a quiz, they very readily attended to her, and the saddler was not backward in claiming acquaintance. They spoke of Miss Denison, and one of them begged she would introduce them to her : she simpered out, “ certainly — but that Eliza was quite countrified, and that she was surprised to find how little she knew of good company ;” and then began making a thousand apologies for what she called her shyness at Lornton.

The gentlemen all declared they had never passed so agreeable a morning, or been more charmed, than with both the ladies : and one of the trio begged the honour of dancing the next two dances with Mrs. Watson ; — that lady had complained of heat and fatigue before Eliza had stood up for the quadrille, and it was with difficulty her husband could prevail upon her to stay for it.

No sooner, however, was this honour requested, than her fatigue and her ill-humour vanished, — all was forgotten in the preference shown her, late as it was.

Eliza, after having finished her quadrille, returned to Mrs. Watson, who immediately said, “Miss Dennison, who shall I say, sir?”

“ Dornford, ma’am, at your service,” replied the gentleman.

“ Aye,” said she, “ it is of no consequence; but Miss Dennison is rather particular about these things — you can’t think how she scolded me for talking to gentlemen without knowing their names. But they are making up the set; Eliza, Mr. Dornford hopes for the pleasure of dancing with you.”

Now there had been something in the manner of his taking her hand during the first dances, when the figure gave him the opportunity, that had much annoyed her; and he had taken the

liberty of whispering many compliments in much too familiar a style to be acceptable to her.

She therefore courtesied, but declined dancing, and turning to Mrs. Watson, she said, "I have to thank you for staying out the quadrille so much against your ~~in~~ inclination; but I am quite ready to attend you now, and there is Mr. Watson looking for us."

"He need not seek long," said Mr. Dornford, "for you two so far outshine all the rest in loveliness, that you must ever be conspicuous."

"You need not be in haste, my love," said Mrs. Watson, as her husband came up; "I'm just now going to begin the evening, it has been very stupid hitherto," and she suffered her partner to lead her away to her place.

Mr. Dornford took hold of Eliza's hand and was following, but she said she was fatigued; and Mr. Watson just then coming up she leant upon him.

" O by Jove that's not fair," said Mr. Dornford; " Mr. Watson has no right to monopolise all the pretty women to himself. Come, come, Watson, sign over and deliver."

Mr. Watson was delighted at the compliment paid to his ladies, and the familiarity to himself, and said he could not " resist the request of such a well-known admirer of the sex." So poor Eliza was given up, and she found that she must either dance, or sit still and hear a conversation which promised nothing agreeable — so she preferred the former, and repelled, as much as possible, the gross adulation he offered her.

When these dances were finished, the company dispersed, and our party returned home in tolerably good humour. Mr. Watson had entered into conversation with the friend of his friend Lord Ansell, who had admired his wife, and spoken familiarly to him.

The next day, he did not forget the

hint his lordship had given him.—The Marchioness of Hastings had read over the petition, which was well expressed; she shewed it to the nobleman whose guest she was, and after much laughing at the easy assurance which had dictated such a request, he said if she could grant it without much trouble, and let it appear that he had recommended her doing so, it might be a means of drawing some of Lord Ansell's votes at the ensuing dissolution of parliament.

The Marchioness was very glad to be of service, so she sent her gentleman to Great Charles-street, to enquire the lad's name, age, and parents. Mr. Watson was at the very moment writing to the Marchioness, and was agreeably surprised by the interruption.

He told what he was about, and encouraged by the interest he had gained, he acknowledged, with unblushing effrontery, that the lad was his own, and ille-

gitimate ; and said, that since the Marchioness was willing to interest herself in this "*little matter*," he would thank her for a writership instead of a cadetship. The man thought he had not heard clearly, so begged that he would put his request, &c. &c. on paper, which would save all misunderstanding, and this Mr. Watson very unceremoniously performed—perhaps regretting, from the facility with which he gained his first point, that there was no good thing he could ask for himself.

The gentleman, much amused by what he had heard, took his leave, after having been regaled with the best viands the house afforded ; and Mr. Watson went out himself to tell all his neighbours that the Marchioness of Hastings had, upon the slightest appeal, given him a writership for a young friend of his. But he did not brag of this to his wife, for this child was one of the secrets he industriously kept from her.

CHAR. XV.

Where's my delicate dainty fish
Which ought to grace the upper dish ?

I see no reason in the law of nature, but I may snap at him.

Henry IV.

All in the Wrong.

THE last day of the festival was now arrived, and Eliza sorrowfully owned to her pillow, that although she had been flattered by as many fine speeches as would content a more greedy vanity than hers, yet fine speeches were too unsubstantial to afford her the luxuries she sighed for.

Mr. Dornford was evidently her admirer, and possibly had he seen her in other society, he might have made her proposals ; but it was almost impossible he could think of her, considering how

she was introduced. His manners were now almost insulting ; but perhaps if she showed him how superior she was to the people he saw her with, and could really interest his feelings, he might yet be caught ; besides, she had learnt that he was heir to a title.

No castle she had ever built was so lofty as that ; she determined therefore to show him her best face, and if possible make him lay aside the levity he now took the liberty of addressing her with : — and fortune afforded her the opportunity of using all her auxiliaries.

This day the Watsons were to have a dinner-party ; and during breakfast, having arranged the articles of the repast, Mr. Watson said, that he would send home the fish, and his wife should pay for it. She gave him many a charge not to be extravagant, and he went in quest of it. . . . Birmingham markets were always well supplied, but now they abounded in luxu-

ries, for which the wealthy and hospitable inheritants gladly gave high 'prices, as every house was filled with guests.

Mr. Watson was just in time to save a turbot from being sent to a customer of the fishmonger's, by offering a still higher price than the man had intended to charge for it. It was a very fine thick turbot, and he agreed to give thirty shillings for it; but he knew if the price was mentioned to his wife, she would not allow the fish to be taken in; and if he paid all, her suspicions would be raised, and that might prevent its reception. But he was fertile in expedients, and he determined to cheat his economical wife, so he paid fourteen shillings out of his own pocket; and the fishmonger was to send in a bill for the remaining sixteen with the turbot.

Hugging himself for his ingenious manœuvre, and in high glee with his success with the Marchioness of Hastings, for of the writership he never had the slightest

doubt, he was about entering the coffee-room when he met Mr. Dornford, who very courteously entered into conversation with him ; and it soon turned upon Miss Dennison, for whom he expressed such unequivocal admiration, that Mr. Watson, who always sailed far before the wind, had already made up his mind to a marriage, and fancied the advantage it would be to him to have her married from his own house. These things presented themselves so immediately, that he asked Mr. Dornford to dine with him, upon one of the finest turbots he had ever seen, and which he had just sent home.

Mr. Dornford, who thought Eliza one of the finest girls he had ever seen, instantly consented : the hour was named, and they separated.

In the meantime the fish was sent home punctually, and the bill presented. Mrs. Watson grumbled sadly, and after

trying to procure an abatement of a shilling, at last paid the sixteen.

Soon after, Mrs. Gibson called to make a visit to the young lady, and she kindly told Eliza that she was sorry she had no opportunity of doing so earlier. In the course of conversation, Mrs. Watson exclaimed against the dearness of fish, and vented her anger at her absent husband, for giving “near a guinea” for a turbot, when soles would have done just as well for the company they were to have. .

“Indeed!” said Mrs. Gibson, “then I wish you would let me take it off your hands, for Mr. Gibson’s fishmonger, who promised us one, could not procure it; and I don’t think he has behaved well, for my cook saw one there which she expected was to be sent to us; but I suppose Lord Ansell, or Mr.—, or some high people, chose to want one, and of course they must be served first.”

Now Mrs. Watson knew that her hus-

band wished to conciliate the Gibsons, for they were very leading people; and the old gentleman had, by being his father's great friend, acquired a sort of influence and authority over him which he could not shake off; and he had not forgotten the reproof Mr. Gibson had given him about the Lorn-ton visit. He had desired his wife to call there every day since, but that lady knew she was no favourite with them, so she troubled them as little as possible.

The idea now struck her, that the turbot might not only be a peace-offering to them, but a gain to herself; for if she could sell that for a guinea, for which she had just paid sixteen shillings, she thought it a good rate of exchange; so she hesitated a moment, and then made it appear a great favour that she pocketed the guinea, and Mrs. Gibson gladly sent for the fish, very little supposing that this was the identical turbot the cook had

ordered, and for which she was to have paid twenty-eight shillings!

Mrs. Watson then sent for some soles, but, alas ! every *soul* in the town was engaged at other tables ; and she could only procure a few haddocks.

Mr. Watson had been in such high spirits all the morning, that he thought he trod on air ; he went to the billiard-room, and there also fortune favoured him, he won his bets ; and this engaged him so far, that he never thought of time until very near the hour of his dinner, — he feared indeed his guests would be there before him ; he went therefore as fast as he could, gave out his wine, and long before he was adonised they arrived.

Eliza and his wife were quite surprised to see Mr. Dornford's carriage stop, and himself get out of it ; but he took great care to tell the former that she was the only attraction.

After waiting some time the host made his appearance, and dinner was

announced. When they were seated, Mr. Watson said, "I think I sent home as fine a turbot as ever I saw, it was not too large, and I hope my cook has done it justice." When, however, the cover was taken off the upper dish, and some paltry haddocks appeared, his surprise, as well as that of his guests, was great; but instantly recollecting himself, it occurred to him that his wife had for once laid aside her usual extreme economy, and given them two dishes of fish, so he took a peep at what was under the cover at his end of the table,—what was his consternation to find a great loin of veal in the place of his delicate fish. "My life," said he, starting from his seat, "where is the turbot?"

"Never mind, my love," returned his deary, very coolly, "I'll tell you all about it by and by, in the meantime these haddocks are every bit as good."

"But I say they are not as good, and I will have my turbot. Where is it?"

said he, speaking to the servant behind him.

The man, who was a hired waiter, answered, "Indeed, sir, I don't know, I have seen no turbot."

"What," said Mr. Watson, quite forgetting his company; "am I to pay thirty shillings for a fish for my friends, and to see them sit down to a parcel of nasty haddocks?"

"Thirty shillings!" exclaimed his wife, "Lord, Mr. Watson, how can you tell such stories? I paid the bill myself, and I'm sure it was only sixteen shillings, and I thought that quite enough."

"Yes, madam," returned her husband, in great wrath at her attack, "I paid fourteen shillings out of my own pocket to save myself from your d—d scoldings. I was aware of your stingy tricks, and that if you knew what it cost, you would not take it in, so I made the man send in the bill for sixteen shillings, and fourteen and sixteen, I think, make thirty. But

pray, madam, where is the fish, for dressed, or undressed, I'll have it in, that my friends may know the rights of it."

Mrs. Watson burst into tears, as she acknowledged she had let Mrs. Gibson have it.

Mr. Watson insisted upon knowing what she had paid for it: his wife hesitated; and Eliza, who dreaded a still more degrading discovery, said that Mrs. Gibson had been in great distress for fish, and that Mrs. Watson had been induced to part with it, not knowing she was to be favoured with so large a party. This diverted his attention from the more honourable part of the transaction, though the guests had a shrewd suspicion of the truth; and Mrs. Watson finding herself relieved from this exposure, very foolishly thought to revenge herself on her husband for the distress he had already occasioned her, — so she passionately sobbed out, "I'm sure my only motive for doing it, was because I knew you had of-

fended Mr. Gibson about his horse, which you borrowed under pretence of having an invitation to dine at — ”

“ Well, well, my life ! ” interrupted Mr. Watson, brought suddenly to recollection from a fear of his own exposure, “ the deed is done, and it cannot be remedied, so pray help Mr. Dornford to some haddock.”

This scene was differently relished by the guests ; to Mr. Dornford it was quite a novelty, and he enjoyed it exceedingly ; and Eliza thought if she pleased, she could let him much more into the character of the thing : however, she was vexed at the circumstance in the present state of things, as she saw the impression it had made upon her neighbour, and she feared it would militate against her interest. She tried therefore to engage the attention of the host, and as he was very good-tempered, she succeeded so far as to make him forget his ill-humour.

Mrs. Watson, soothed by some com-

pliments from the gentlemen near her, dried her bright eyes, and harmony was restored.

They had dined somewhat earlier than they would otherwise have done, to allow the gentlemen to get their wine before they attended the concert ; and when they joined the ladies, it was quite evident they had not thrown away their time ; and as no one of the party had been present at the morning's amusement, they went together to the concert, where, had she had no other thoughts, Miss Dennison would have enjoyed the music.

Mr. Dornford would not appear to belong to their party in public ; but took care that, whether absent or present, Eliza should attend to no one but himself ; for when he left her, it was only to bring some one to show her to, and then the high-flown compliments were too loud to pass unheard. But Eliza, much as she wished to flatter herself, could not mistake the nature of them, and she

felt extremely offended and disgusted ; but he disregarded all her expressions of offence and displeasure, and forced her to hear, that he had never thought of any thing else since first he saw her ; that she was the most captivating creature he had ever beheld ; and that to pass his life with such a being, would be happiness too great for this world. He said a great deal of the cruelty of her manner, which never gave him any encouragement ; and behaved so little to her satisfaction, that she was heartily tired of him, and glad when the concert was over. There was now only one other public meeting, which was to be a ball on the following evening : the festival was over, and this was to be the winding up of the whole.

CHAP. XVI.

All offences my liege come from the heart.

Henry V.

An Affront.

IN the course of the next morning Mr. Watson bounced into the drawing-room, and with visible triumph delivered Eliza a letter. “ There,” said he, “ did I not tell you you would find a husband in Birmingham; a friend too of Lord Ansell’s, and heir to a coronet himself.”

“ Well, I do confess,” said his wife, to whom he had before communicated the ideas he had imbibed of the near approach of Mr. Dornford’s declaration, “ I am quite surprised, for my dear Eliza’s man-

ner was certainly very unkind to him. Even last night, when he was saying such fine things to her, so loud that any body might hear them, instead of seeming pleased, she looked as haughty as if she had been a queen and he her slave: however, my dear girl, I'm sure nobody rejoices so much in your good fortune as I do, and I am very happy too that it was through us, and our introduction, that you have such an offer."

"I should like for her to be married from this house," said Mr. Watson, "and I'd take care to have a gay wedding."

"Yes, and so should I too," said his wife, "only it would be very expensive."

"D——n the expense," returned her spouse, "you are always throwing cold water upon my plans by your abominable stinginess; — and now I think of it, you'll please to pay me the full price of the fish; and if you don't choose to expose yourself to Madam Gibson, you'll just pay it out of your own allowance,

and I hope it will teach you a lesson for the future.”

The lady seemed by no means willing to accede to this proposition, and a matrimonial squabble, of no tame description, would most likely have succeeded, had not Eliza burst into a violent rage of indignation : — she asked for a sheet of paper, and was about to enclose the letter she had received and just read ; but Mr. Watson’s curiosity (to say nothing of his wife’s) was too powerful to suffer this, and he requested to see what had given her so much offence.

Mrs. Watson, with less delicacy, took up the letter, opened, and read it ; and as it contained hyperbolical expressions of unalterable love, it was quite to her taste ; and she said, she could “not understand what she would have, if that did not satisfy her.”

Mr. Watson, who had read the letter over his wife’s shoulder, then acknow-

ledged, that it was to be sure “ rather ambiguous ;” but that he was confident no friend of Lord Ansell’s would ever behave improperly to any one under his roof or his protection ; and, therefore, she should by no means do any thing which should discourage such a lover.—In the evening they would be certain to meet him in the ball-room, for he had informed him they should be there, and that by his manner then, she could determine how to act, and explain herself fully to him.

Eliza said she should decline going if that was the case, for that she wanted no explanation.

Mr. Watson laughingly observed, that perhaps she would rather choose to have a private *tête-a-tête* with him at home ; for that if she insisted upon staying at home, he should certainly send him to her ;—but that he really thought she was playing with her bread and butter, for that such offers did not occur

every day : — and he then began to enumerate how many young ladies would “jump at having half the attention which Mr. Dornford had paid her.”

Eliza, rather than have Mr. Watson’s threats put into execution, and perhaps with some latent hope herself that he might yet be brought to do as she wished, determined to go. Fain would she believe Mr. Watson’s assertions ; — but her reason told her, that under the protection of any of her other friends, Mr. Dornford would not have dared to treat her with levity or disrespect ; and her hopes sank as she prepared for the evening.

Mrs. Watson declared she should have been quite unhappy if she had not gone : — she took great pains at her toilette, and really outshone herself. When they entered the ball-room, her figure was so striking and so fashionable, that the gentlemen universally admired her, and she had soon the pleasure of seeing some

of her former military partners, who immediately engaged her.

Mr. Watson endeavoured to prevent her dancing before Mr. Dornford arrived, assuring her that it would be an affront to him :—but if any thing was to be made of that gentleman, Eliza knew much better than her host how to do it. She therefore was very glad of an opportunity of showing him how indifferent and independent she was.

The first set of country dances was finished, and Eliza walking up and down the room with her last partner, when Mr. Dornford entered ; — he was attending a young and very handsome girl, (the same Lord Ansell had walked and danced with on the first night,) and they were with a large party.

Like the preceding night, he took no notice of the Watsons, excepting by a bow of simple recognition. When, however, Eliza passed them, he spoke to her ; — but far from asking her to dance,

or taking any apparent interest in her, he stood up with the young lady ; and in the course of the dance, he took an opportunity of whispering, that she looked like an angel, as she was, and that she must keep herself disengaged, — for that although he should be forced to leave the room with his present “ little doll ” of a partner, he should return to claim her as soon as possible.

He then ran on in such overwhelming profusion of compliment, that Eliza, who longed to mortify him, had no opportunity of telling him she was engaged for every dance.

Just before he attended the young lady, the “ little doll,” home, he ran up to Eliza, and familiarly whispered her “ not to make him jealous, by her love for the red coats.”

Eliza’s blood boiled : — she remarked the polite gentlemanly attentions he paid to his partner, — the respect and the elegance of his manner to her ; and she

could not help feeling how differently he behaved to her:—if she could once bring him to those manners to herself, instead of the levity he treated her with, she would take care of the rest:—she had had many lessons now, and it was her own fault if she was not a skilful manœuvrer.

He soon returned, and hastened to the place where she was sitting, near Mr. and Mrs. Watson: the former immediately gave up his place, and drew off his wife, leaving her in the most bare-faced way, as if on purpose for a private conversation. Few were less at a loss than Eliza—she tried all her powers to bring him to a proper declaration, but he parried her attacks so ably, that she found her hopes decrease every minute. At length she said, in answer to some of his professions, “If, sir, your intentions are what they ought to be, and what are my due, I beg to refer you to Mr. Trevillyan, of Eldrington-Hall.”

“And why any reference, my angel?”

replied Mr. Dornford, while his eyes spoke much more than his words—"you and I, without any other auxiliary, can very well understand each other." And then, seeing the colour mount high in her cheek, and her eye flash with indignation, he added, "Your sister Sophy, if I mistake not, required no third person to mediate between her and Sir John Needlowell."

"Sir," said Eliza, with great warmth, "there are few gentlemen so ungenerous, I believe, as to upbraid me with my sister's indiscretions; and I beg to observe, that deeply as I must ever regret and deplore her misconduct, I do not feel myself half so humbled by it, as by the insolence of your present conversation; nor could the highest situation you have the power to offer me, make me for a moment forget the contempt with which I now regard you." — She then abruptly rose, and crossed the room to Mr. Watson.

Mr. Dornford followed her, and said, most provokingly, “ You can’t think how the heroics become you—faith ! I never saw you look so handsome before.” She did not condescend to answer him, but turned to Mr. Watson, and besought him to see her into a coach, for that she felt very unwell, and must go home immediately.

Mr. Watson, seeing Mr. Dornford close to her, said, “ Certainly I will try to get you a coach if you wish it, but I fear the one I have ordered is not yet in waiting ; and there is no friend here that I could well ask for the use of theirs.”

“ Mine is in attendance,” said the intolerable Mr. Dornford, “ and I shall be happy in the honour of seeing the lady home.”

“ I would rather prefer walking, to troubling you, sir,” haughtily replied Eliza.

“ Yes, faith, it is a pleasant night, and the evening air is often beneficial in

cooling one, and allaying the effervescence one is apt to imbibe in heated rooms," said Mr. Dornford, with the most provoking irony.

"Mr. Watson," said Eliza, "I am going, will you attend me?"

Her host saw she was determined; he did not like to interrupt his wife, who was dancing with great spirit, so he did as she requested him; and without the least notice to Mr. Dornford, she left the room, and reached home in safety. She immediately retired to her own room, threw herself into a chair, and bitterly lamented her own "cruel fate."

About an hour afterwards, the Watsons returned home. She expected at least a message of enquiry from her "dear friend," who was so much interested in her, and who was so delighted at being the medium of her prosperity. But none arrived; and she heard them pass her door, without even saying "good night."

When people are out of spirits, the

slightest incivility is sorely felt, and Eliza found herself offended by this neglect, so she determined to shorten her visit, and return to the Rectory.

At breakfast the next morning, Mr. Watson told her that he was commissioned by Mr. Dornford to make an apology for him, if he had said anything to displease her.

Eliza asked how they came to talk of it.
‘ Why,’ said Mr. Watson, ‘ I saw you were offended, and I asked Dornford what he had said? He answered he had only paid you a few compliments. ‘ Aye, aye,’ says I, ‘ compliments won’t do, you must pop the question at once, you must speak plain.’

‘ Faith,’ says he, ‘ I spoke as plain as I could this evening, but if I have offended her pray make my apology,’ and with that he left the room.”

Of course such an apology did not appease the incensed young lady, and she avowed her determination to leave Bir-

mingham the end of that week. Mr. Watson could not hear of it : he declared this was only a love quarrel ; that “young ladies may be ~~too~~ *too coy* as well as *too coming*.” But he was much less sanguine of the marriage since this conversation ; and though he had set his heart upon having it take place from his own house, and had already thought what a fine public breakfast he would give, and who should be invited to it ; yet if the lady was not more “*coming*,” as he happily expressed himself, all must be given up.

Mrs. Watson, whose surprise had been excited all the time at Mr. Dornford’s preference and devotion, and who was not so much bent upon the match as her husband, soon saw it was all over ; and it was astonishing how exactly one might trace the probability of Eliza’s prosperity, by the barometer of her manners. She said she was sorry, but if Miss Denison really wished to go, the servant had better take her place in the coach in

time, as it might be full, and she disappointed.

While they were settling this, a letter was put into Mr. Watson's hands, not from the Marchioness of Hastings, as he expected, but from —, her gentleman; to say, that however much the Marchioness was disposed to serve people of moderate expectations, yet a writership was not in her power to bestow; and that his letter had developed circumstances, which rendered it quite impossible she could ever interest herself further on the subject.

Disappointment upon disappointment! he could hardly conceal his vexation, but as it was a mystery to his wife, he dared not indulge it audibly. It was more necessary now than ever to keep it from her; and she had set down the great anxiety he evinced for the plate to his laudable ambition; as only the first men in the county were appointed to the office.

He was now in no humour to form new projects ; and there was little hope of success in Eliza's affair, without she would allow him to ~~direct~~ her. • So her “dear friend” suffered her to depart, after a visit of little more than a fortnight, instead of six months, as at first proposed ; and so ended this warm and violent friendship.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

